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[PRICE ONE PENNY]



[THE MISSING LINK.]

FAIR ANNE OF CLY. THE STORY OF A LIFE'S AMBITION.

CHAPTER XI.

All that's bright must fade,
The brightest still the fleetest;
All that's sweet was made,
But to be lost when sweetest. Moore.

THE unsteady gentleman seemed to regain a good deal of his natural steadiness as he went on talking to the young farmer, and his speech became plainer and pleasanter—favourable signs of the return of human reason, however much or little he had of that much-abused commodity.

Will took him inside the "Golden Dove" and questioned him more closely.

"What do you mean by 'somebody will suffer'?" he asked.

"My late master is a gentleman, you know, sir, and in some things not a bad one; but he's one of the poor branches of the Whitbert circle, and he's been rascally, like a good many of those sort of people, and he hain't hover scrupulous, and when these sort of games goes on I himagines hat wunce there'll be somebody wot will suffer."

The ex-valet was slow in delivering himself of this information, he had occasional interruptions in the way—sudden and unpleasantly noisy catchings of the breath; but Will was patient. The man was getting better.

"But I want to know more than this of your master, Mr. —"

"Diver," said the valet.

"Diver?"

"Allan Diver, sir."

"Mr. Allan Diver," repeated Will, half inclined to smile. "I want to know if you have any clue to his whereabouts now."

"Yes, sir; but —"

"Mr. Diver, let me inform you at once that I shall give you a sovereign if you will kindly tell me what you know of your master's sudden disappearance, and where you think he went to."

"That's fair enough, sir. Well, then, he has been here two days, which old Rowhouse will tell you. Rowhouse is the landlord. I was here, too, but I didn't let him see me. Thank you. Hi, of course, felt curious to learn his little game and watched him go hout, wich was seldom; but he met his sister 'ere this morning and shortly after away they goes togethor and meets a young lady with a thick veil on, and after some parley they hall three goes holf to Coke Lane Station and took train—"

"For London?"

"No, sir. I found hout that the train they took was for the south coast—passing and pulling up at Cliffe Town."

"That is all you know?"

"Yes, sir."

"You have told me the truth, of course?"

"Look here, sir: Hi'm much obliged for your generosity—speaking as though much hurt, but pocketing the sovereign Will gave him—but you don't know me."

"There is some truth in that certainly, but Mr. Diver, don't you think it sounds strange or spiteful to hear you speaking of your late master as you have done?"

"Spiteful, spiteful!" repeated the injured Diver, with much emphasis on the word, that seemed too much for him to bear. "Wot did he sack me for, sack me without a day's notice, and struck me as well, struck me 'ard too; but the blow hain't forgotten."

And there was no doubting the sincerity of that. The light in his eyes and alternate redness and pallor of the cheeks belied that there was any attempt at acting.

Will, even while Allan Diver had been speaking, made up his mind what to do, which was to drive over to Coke Lane Station, go by train to Cliffe Town, and make inquiries there.

"You are sure the train went to Cliffe Town direct?"

"Yes, sir," answered Diver. "That was the first station it stopped at. I inquired."

Will paid for some whisky Nixon had indulged in

and strode out, followed by Diver, and clung to by Nixon, who was whispering in his ear some very earnest advice.

"You'd better hire him, Mr. William," indicating Diver by pointing with his thumb over his shoulder, "becos you'd better take me with you."

"I don't think it necessary, Nixon."

"I do, Mr. William, please. Divers can take the gig home, and it's nicer for you, Mr. William, to travel with a servant, and you see I've got my best togs on. Don't you think I looks a regular swell's groom, eh, Mr. William?"

"Well, yes, Nixon; I think that's undeniable," replied Mr. William, glancing with a smile at the neat figure and smart livery of the squire's favourite—but I can do very well, Nixon, without making people believe I'm what I am not."

"But then you don't make people believe," argued Nixon; "they needn't unless they like."

"Well, well, he may come to Coke Lane. I'll settle my mind going along."

"All right, sir. I say, Divers!"

"Hallo," answered he, sulkily; he objected to being called Divers.

"Will you come with Mr. William to Coke Lane? You'll be wanted to drive the gig back to the squire's. Come on; jump up."

Mr. Allan Diver did not jump up. We have said that much of his natural steadiness had returned and his mind was very little muddled, but it was too soon to attempt the feat Nixon so kindly urged.

Mr. Allan Diver was slow in mounting to the seat offered him; he was cautious in his mode of getting there.

"You see, Mr. William," said Nixon, recurring to the late subject, as the young farmer drove rapidly towards Coke Lane Station, "it's unfair of you, to say you'll seem what you ain't in having me with you. I can tell you, Mr. William, but that I owes Squire Lynn a big debt of gratitude I'd come to you to-morrow free gratis, becous I know when I meets a gentleman with heart and mind in the right place, I does. Nixon ain't no fool."

"My ways of life are too dull for there to be any

pleasure in sharing them," answered Will, a little moodily; he was thinking more deeply of Kate Lynn than many would have thought him capable of. "I'm happy enough."

"So am I. Why, Mr. William, I'm one of them chaps as can be happy under any circumstances. It's easy for everybody to be happy at jolly times, but I'm happy at all times, for, Mr. William, I takes a pleasure in being jolly under miserable circumstances."

"I hope, Nixon, nothing will ever happen to turn your nature; life will be a blessing to you so long as you can take it in that pleasant way."

"That's true, Mr. William. I don't mean to say that I never feels grief like. I'm sorry at what's happened to Miss Kate, and I feels grieved to see master as he is. I knows him better than anybody and can tell when he's nursing sorrow. Mr. William, you'll take me? Do, Mr. William. I shall be able to point out Clancurdy in a minute, and I knows Cliffe Town and London if we should have to go there, if master gives me leave."

They were driving into the carriage-way of the small, gloomy, outlandish station now.

Nixon asked very wistfully, and Will thought perhaps company on the sad search would be better for him. Nixon's quaint speech and honest, half-comic nature pleased him.

"Very well, Nixon, you may come."

It took both hands then to save Nixon's hat, it went with startling rapidity from the right eyebrow to the left and then on the bridge of his nose, whence it would have rolled under the wheels of the gig had he not caught it brim upwards in his hands.

Having thus expressed his delight to the danger of his hat, he turned towards Mr. Allan Diver, who awoke with a start from a tranquil doze.

Nixon, like a faithful, well-trained servant, followed at once on the track of his master. Certainly Nixon must have found him by instinct, for the little station was in a state of miserable gloom.

"The last train to-night leaves in twenty minutes, Nixon," Will said, glancing up at his follower while speaking, and then drooping his head over a piece of paper on which he was writing the details of what had taken place up to the present time.

"Give this to Mr. Diver, Nixon. It is for the squire. Caution Diver about driving too quickly and against going to sleep."

"All right, Mr. William."

Nixon stole quietly out of the station and got behind Diver so noiselessly that Mr. Allan was not aware of the other's presence.

"Divers!" said Nixon.

"Eh?" said Diver, with a start. "Hallo! what a idiot you are!"

"Well, I wasn't asleep anyhow and I wasn't startled out of my skin through being spoke to," said Nixon, grinning and winking aggravatingly at the ex-valet. "Can you drive?"

"I 'spose so."

"Not much, eh?"

"Quite enough to look after myself and this thing too."

"This thing!" repeated Nixon, pointing to his favourite roan; "why, I tell you, old man, she's one of the most obstreperous roans under the sun. She drives with one rein tighter than the other, only it doesn't matter which one. She alwys goes to sleep when a stranger is driving her, kicks both heels up when he uses the whip and then gallops at a mad pace all the way home; so I warns ye. Good night, Divers. Give this note to the squire, and be civil. There may be a good place in perspective, as the artists say, if you're civil and got a character, which I'm sure you have, if it's only a bad one. Good night, Divers."

The note was delivered into the ex-valet's hands and Nixon went back into the station, while Mr. Allan Diver, with much inward trepidation, tenderly picked up the reins and meekly coaxed the little full-blooded roan to make a start, which she did at a pace that threatened death to the driver and destruction to the gig.

The south-coast train came in and a sudden burst of light spread over the platform, and Will Darian with Nixon at his heels made all the nervous haste that belongs to men unused to travelling to get a seat.

"This is my carriage, Mr. William," said Nixon, looking at his second-class ticket.

"Then it's mine too," said Will, jumping in after the groom, much to that person's surprise.

"Thought you'd a-gone first, Mr. William," he said, getting into the farther corner from the young farmer.

Will smiled at his quaint follower, but the smile was not quite void of the dreadful anxiety that was tugging and tearing at his heart.

"I took second-class for both of us, Nixon," he

said. "I had you with me for companionship's sake."

"It's very kind of you to say so, Mr. William," answered Nixon, deferentially, "very."

"And so long as I don't mind you needn't," continued Will, "and it is nothing to do with anybody else."

"Certainly not, Mr. William."

"It's a very dark and dreary night, Nixon, isn't it?"

"Yes, Mr. William, very, and the wind is rather high, very high in fact for the time of year."

"Oh, seasons change now, Nixon. Autumn is not so certain in its weather as it used to be, so the old folks say."

"The old folks often say a good many things that ain't true, Mr. William. I daresay if they was to jog up their memories a bit they would be able to recall many an autumn day that was as cold as December and dull as a November fog. But I'm not at all surprised at anything what occurs in this blessed isle of the sea. It never makes no difference to me. Wet or dry, snow or frost, I'm alwys pretty comfortable."

The train, dashing on its course, passed the stations that were not on the driver's list for stopping at, and sped demon-like through the broad tract of broken country that spread away to the coast, as it does near the vicinity of the sea, the wind became fresher and the clouds broke and dashed together over the hills and wooded heights, as though threatening to war upon the very face of the earth.

Will, looking out upon the black darkness that lay over the fields, park, and woods, became alive to the fact that the train was rushing into the thick gloom of a tunnel, and he drew in his head as quickly as if he had been shot at. Then came the confused deafening, crashing, whirling and hissing noises that mingled together making the new traveller think the very confines of the earth were rushing in upon him. Ten minutes of this and then the train dashed out into the night air, and a few glimmering lights about told Will that a station was near; the slackening of the speed of the engine assured him that the station was Cliffe Town.

Will and his follower leaped on to the platform when the train stopped, waited until all the other passengers bound to the same destination had alighted, given up their tickets, and gone their ways, and the train had passed on; then he gave up his ticket and asked for the station-master.

The ticket collector was civil, and now that his momentary run of business was over, could afford to be obliging, and at once went to the station-master's office and brought him out to the young farmer.

Will very politely asked him if he happened to have been on the platform when the first train from Coke Lane station arrived. The station-master said he had been. Could he remember any of the persons that alighted? The station-master could quite well, so few did alight then.

Will described the Hon. George Clancurdy and Miss Lynn, and added there was another lady with them young and fashionably dressed.

"I think, sir, I noticed the persons you mean," said the station-master.

He called to the ticket collector,

"Franks,"

"Yes, sir."

"Can you remember taking tickets from two ladies and a gentleman who arrived from Coke Lane station this morning?" Then turning to Will, he added, "It's best to be certain, sir, the confirmation of two is better than the belief of one."

"Well, sir," answered Franks, having duly considered the question, "I could, I think, swear upon it. Yes, they did; I remember now. I called Joe to get the fly for them."

Questioned by the station-master, Franks very closely described the Hon. G. Clancurdy and the ladies, and proceeded to inform Will, though speaking at the station-master, that the gentleman, Joe had said, was driven down to the Fisherman's Creek, a little beyond Marine Villa, the house of Admiral Moonlake.

"Joe said, sir, that the party went off in a small pleasure yacht which he thought must have belonged to the gentleman."

Will's heart dropped then as if it had been torn from its support.

"How far is Fisherman's Creek from here?"

"About three miles, sir; perhaps more."

"From outside the town, eh?"

"That's about it, sir."

Will cast a helpless glance at Nixon, and heaved a deep sigh.

"How are we to get there?" he asked. "I do not know the way; do you, Nixon?"

"No, sir, no, Mr. William; I'm very sorry to say I don't. I knows this town, and that's all!"

"Can I get the fly?"

"No, sir, I am afraid not," answered Franks. "Joe lives nearly a mile from here."

"We can try," the station-master interposed, kindly; "I am going to tea now, and my home is very near to Joe's. If you will wait five minutes I will go with you."

"Thank you, sir," said Will, offering his hand. "It's more kindness than I could expect from a stranger."

"Not at all, my dear sir," was the smiling answer, and then the station-master disappeared and Will was left to the haunting reflection that his search was nearly at an end, for he could not follow them over the seas.

The station-master did not keep the young farmer waiting longer than he had said, and together the trio left the station and made quickly for Joe's, who, we must infer, was the distinguished owner of the fly. He was in bed and asleep, and it took as long to knock him up as Will might have walked a quarter of a mile in.

Joe made so many objections, too, when he was aroused, to undertaking the journey that Will, with an impatient stamp of the foot, consigned him verbally to rest, but not in bed, and walked away.

"We will walk it," he said.

"Not to-night, will you?" inquired his companion from the station.

"Yes, at once. Being so late to come, Nixon won't mind."

"No, Mr. William. I shall look upon it as a jolly ramble. The wind's rough and the sky looks rainy; but what of that? I ought to be able to be jolly under these trifling circumstances."

"Then I'll bid you good night, sir," said the station-master, pausing. "There is my house, and if a storm should come on and you want a retreat, do not forget where I live. There's plenty of room for you and your servant, and an Englishman's hospitality with it."

"Thank you."

"My name is Waters."

"Thank you, Mr. Waters; I shall not forget should I be in need of a shelter."

They shook hands, bid good night and parted. The night promised to be most unpropitious one, the lowering clouds threatened every instant to throw down heavy torrents of rain, and the wind was blowing quite a gale.

Will, however, with only the stern purpose of his heart paramount in his mind, strode on, and Nixon, whose tongue never tired, kept up with him step for step and talked all the way.

The simple-hearted fellow saw well enough now that there was something at the bottom of the deep interest Will began to show in the matter.

The walk at that dead hour of the night was a tedious one, and seemed when they got to their journey's end a hopeless one. Here and there lay a tiny fisherman's hut shrouded in a heavier gloom than they had before met with. Not far distant the little town, visible by a few dull lights, was sleeping; high up on the beach two fishing-boats rested on their sides; on the sea hung a thick, impenetrable gray mist, and the waves rolled one over the other in mighty liquid hills.

Now poor Will felt indeed helpless.

What could he do? There was no one about to give him information. If he knocked up some of the fishermen, what could they do? Nothing more than confirm or contradict the words of the ticket-collector.

"I have been thoughtless," he said, angered with himself. "I might have known I did no good coming here to-night."

"You acted for the best, Mr. William. Good may turn up from it for all we know. I'll knock somebody up anyhow," said Nixon.

Off he went to the nearest hut and began plying the toe of his boot to the door so vigorously that it was opened with unexpected rapidity, and his foot shot inside with such force that he nearly swung his leg out of joint.

"Avast, avast there, man alive!" said a rough, hoarse voice, the owner of which stood before Nixon in a half-inquiring, half-threatening attitude. "What d'ye want?"

Will came forward and answered that question.

"I want you, my friend, to answer me a few questions if you will."

"Certainly, sir, if I can. Johnny, bring a light—will you step in, sir?"

Will stepped into the little sitting-room, when a round-faced, sunburnt boy of about fifteen appeared, bearing in his hand a light.

Will sat down upon a sort of bench; Nixon stood up with his hat in his hands; and the fisherman gazed from one to the other in some surprise. Will put a few very simple questions, which elicited the information that a yacht called the "Antelope" left there early in the morning with a gentleman and two ladies.

The man went on to say that if the young farmer would wait till to-morrow one of his mates who had sailed out about the same time might be able to give him some knowledge of what course the yacht had steered.

The fisherman, with a kinder heart than his rough, face betokened, then informed Will that he lived there with his boy Johnny, and that there was plenty of room if they would accept such poor lodging as he could offer.

Gladly did Will accept it. He was fatigued, so was Nixon, and though they had meagre trussle beds they slept soundly through the night and awoke refreshed.

They must have slept soundly indeed, for the old fisherman informed them in the morning that the night had been a fearfully wild one.

The next day was fine, the weather calm. Will left the hut early and rambled about the beach in expectation of the return of the fisherman's mate, but the day lagged slowly away and darkness was setting in, when the little fishers' barque hove in sight under the cliffs.

The little barque was battered, the sails were torn, the fishermen on board pale and haggard. They had been nearly lost; they could not think of the death they had escaped without a shudder; and when the master of the boat was questioned about the "Antelope" his face grew whiter still and a deeper shudder went through his frame.

He picked up from the deck of his little barque a long black-painted plank that bore the yacht's name, an undeniable record of its fate, and its fate was a fearful one.

"She must a' gone to pieces, sir," he said, looking up into Will's blanched face.

Then every rugged heart melted at the loud sob of anguish that welled up from the young farmer's deep chest.

"Oh, Kate! why—why did you go—to leave us like this?"

His secret was told then. Another sob, one sudden gush of tears and then he lay upon the ground quite as still as if lifeless.

The fishermen thought that sobbing groan had been a death-cry, and they clustered round his still form in silent awe.

CHAPTER XII.

When I consider life, 'tis all a cheat.
Yet, fooled with hope, men favour the deceit;
Trust on, and think to-morrow will repay.
To-morrow's falsest than the former day—
Lies worse; and while it says, "We shall be blest
With some new joys," cuts off what we possess.
Dryden.

A BURST of glittering sights had dazzled the eyes of Anne when the contents of the casket were revealed. There were diamond bracelets, necklace and wreath for the hair, besides a magnificent opal and diamond engaged ring. Anne placed that upon her finger. It was a shade too large, but not sufficiently so to be in danger of dropping off.

A brief, well-worded note came with them, in which his lordship mentioned that he was preparing to leave for London and that Madame Marville would be at Rook Farm to convey to her his wishes so soon as he was about to start.

"Oh, mamma, how lovely those diamonds are! How kind and considerate Warton is, for I may call him Warton now."

"Lovely and costly the present is, my love, but you have other things to look to for happiness than diamonds and gold."

"Oh, mamma! Look here, I never noticed this P.S. on the other side of the note. Listen. 'Present to your esteemed mother, from me, the diamond and ruby ring which you will find with a brooch to match under the tray of the casket.' Now, mamma, is not that nice?"

"Well, I begin to think," said Farmer Darian, "that I have had a wrong opinion of his lordship. Confound it! If he isn't a good and upright, jolly fellow after all."

Mrs. Darian for once gave way. As she smiling through her tears, put the ring upon her finger and the brooch on her neck, she cried a little from a feeling she could not explain. The position her daughter was about to hold began to force itself more comprehensively upon her, and there was a sort of hysterical gladness at her heart over so much unexpected good fortune.

No one is purely exempt from all feeling of selfishness. No one is entirely without ambition; whether one has strength of purpose enough to gain one's ambitious ends is of course another matter.

Sentimentalism can soon be easily rubbed out, and it was simple sentimentalism mingled with love for Sidney that made Mrs. Darian prejudiced against a match at once so uncommon and grand.

"Peter," she said, the day after the arrival of the jewels, and when the farmer was enjoying his even-

ing pipe, "we must not let Anne go entirely empty-handed. We can afford to make a little sacrifice for her under the circumstances."

"Certainly, my dear. I was only just looking over my books to see how affairs stood. Thank Heaven for its graciousness, we have grown richer by twelve hundred pounds during the last two harvests, without the interest of the money laying by."

"That I am glad to hear, Peter."

"And we can spare a couple of hundred pounds for Anne towards her—what's its name?"

"Trousseau."

"Yes, that's it. And if all goes well, on the day when she's Countess of Dalryell, why, we will have a feast at this old house for all Anne's old companions."

Mrs. Darian smiled pleasantly, and then burst into a laugh; she wondered whether Anne would be so enthusiastic about such a celebration.

"I shall have to devote the next two or three days then in getting things for Anne. Will you let me have some money to-morrow morning?"

"Yes, my dear, the first thing. I wish Will was home. It's unfortunate that he should be away at this moment."

"Perhaps it's all for the best, Peter. I don't suppose he will return until some definite clue to Kate's fate is discovered. Will thought more of Kate Lynn than you or I ever expected. I have watched him of late, and it is only his natural shyness that kept him from constantly seeking her company."

The farmer laughed rather heartily. It seemed odd to him to hear of the love affair. Will, big as he was, seemed a boy to the farmer, and he never had loved when he was a boy, but "Lovers change, and so do people," was his limited philosophical remark, and he went on smoking with Tommy at his knees till bed-time.

Very few of the people either in the town of Cly or the village were ignorant of the grand alliance about to take place, thanks to Master Tomray, who thought he could not give his sister too much credit nor the affair too much publicity.

Every day brought some of Anne's old playfellows to the farm, to congratulate her upon the good fortune that had fallen to her lot.

Anne had perfect little *levées* in the afternoons, and the good opinion her friends had always held of the fair beauty of Cly was only strengthened.

These little *levées* had an abrupt termination when Mr. Darian informed Anne that they should at once see about getting ready for the grand event which, the good mother felt, was not far off.

Lord Dalryell never neglected to send a note to his fiancée every morning. As he could not spare the time to come and take her for a drive, his brougham was at Anne's disposal, and Anne made use of it on the shopping expeditions.

So the days went by, and all was continued bustle and excitement, an excitement which was slightly added to by the very unexpected appearance of Madame Marville.

She was cold as ever to the farmer, coldly polite to Mrs. Darian, but gracious to a killing extent with Anne, who was suddenly her "dear love, sweet child," and suchlike.

"How glad I am to meet you under these circumstances, my pet girl," she said, kissing Anne with a great show of boiling-hot affection. "Did I not always say that if you acted upon my instructions I would make a lady of you?"

"Upon my word, my dear madam, you did," laughed Anne, "though I took the promise in a very different sense."

"How wrong of you, dear love, to be so sceptical at your tender age too! Upon my word, I think Mrs. Darian ought to be very grateful to me for what I have done for you; who else I wonder would have taken such pains to accomplish you in so short a time, and always introduce you to my noblest patrons and hold you up as a pattern of perfection?"

"No one could feel that they owe you a deeper debt of gratitude than I do," said Mrs. Darian, placidly, but earnestly. "I am sure, Madame Marville, I have always felt that the money we paid was most inadequate to the good you did my daughter."

"Ah!" sighed Madame. "It was a labour of love, I could not have done for gain what I did for sweet Anne; had she been a child of mine I could not have esteemed her more."

Madame Marville seated herself languidly and not to say daintily in the best easy-chair that graced the "best room" of the farmhouse, and after a pause, that was meant to show them that she suffered much from the fatigues of the journey, she resumed:

"I must tell you, my love, that I have, at the express and earnest wish of your future noble husband, given up my establishment, as he thinks it would be wise and more comfortable for you to have some one capable of being intellectually of service to you as well as a companion and chaperone. Of course there is much for you to learn, and I admire the delicate

consideration that prompted his lordship to allow me the honour of teaching you, that you may be saved any feelings of pain or embarrassment at any time. Do you not think it a charming piece of forethought?"

She might have added that she admired the consideration that would put eight hundred pounds a year in her pocket, and a good home in her way free of expence.

Anne said she was delighted; proud as she was, she could not but admit that she would suffer much restraint at first, unless she had some one to pilot her through the duties of her new position.

Madame went on to explain her mission.

"His lordship leaves Cly to-morrow at four, and expresses his wish for you to be there twenty minutes before that time, that he may see you before he leaves. You will not return, but remain with me at the Hyde, where everything is done for your reception and where your wedding trousseau will be got ready. Therefore, my sweet love, get all your things, that is all that you can with propriety order to be sent after you, and I shall be here to fetch you."

"I will be ready, madame."

"You will occasionally look in, Mrs. Darian." This Madame said condescendingly.

"Until my daughter is entirely mistress of her own actions, Madame Marville, I shall of course exercise a mother's right and a mother's duty."

"Very natural and very proper," said Madame, with a bow and a hidden sneer. "You will be ready for us to-morrow, I'm sure."

"I shall be waiting for you, madame," answered Anne, and Madame took her leave as though she were nothing less than a dowager duchess much too young for the position.

Mrs. Darian was quieter than she had been after Madame left. She had hoped her daughter would not be taken from her till the last moment, but there was no help for it, and for the first time since Master Tommy had uttered his first cry in the world the farmer was up pretty nearly all night, and his wife only snatched a few hours' doze.

Madame Marville was punctual next day, and Anne was ready. The leave-taking was not a very painful one on this occasion. The distance that divided the Hyde from Rook Farm was not a great one, and Mrs. Darian could see her daughter every day. The farmer expected her to come and see him.

Anne found her lordly suitor equipped and ready to start. The carriage was at the door, the portmanteau on its top, the valet waiting in an auto-chamber, ostensibly to be at hand in case of orders, secretly to catch up every crumb of conversation his long ears might catch.

Dalryell showed his double row of brilliant teeth when he smiled a greeting, and he kissed Anne's pretty hand very formally.

"Good little pet," he said, kissing her again, this time on the brow. "I am glad you came in time for me to see you."

"Indeed, I was only too glad to see you, my—May I call you Warton?"

"Could I wish for any other name while this one sounds so pretty from your lips?"

"Warton. I was so anxious to come and thank you for the very lovely presents. See, I wear the bracelets. The ring has not left my finger since it came."

"You put too much value upon them, sweet pet. I will send you better than those from London. I am going chiefly on your account. You will be happy here while I am away?"

"Yes, very happy. I may go all over the great house, may I?"

"With the freedom that should belong to its mistress. And now, little one, pay attention to what Madame may advise you, and be ready on the eighth of next month—that will be ten days to-morrow, when you will be Lady Dalryell. Everything is arranged, and the marriage will take place at the old village church in Cly. I must start now. Good bye, bless you, good bye!"

He kissed her fair forehead once more and then strode out, his pale, calm face as rigid as that of a statue, his brows down over his eyes.

Dalryell did not go direct to London as had been his first intention, but to Paris—Paris the great and fair city of the age, alas! and now—

He did not go for pleasure, but to get presents for Anne, to procure the latest fashionable novelties in dress and jewellery, which he sent on by the quickest and safest means, and then started for London.

How happily the days flew with Anne now. Each one that came brought some parcel or box for her, fitted with all the luxuries that wealth alone can procure.

How glorious were the hours spent in the room that was occupied by eight or ten of the best French and English court milliners, who were getting up her wardrobe!

How easily amidst all this she almost quite forgot Sidney, and only gave a few kind passing thoughts to her absent brother!

Will she longed to see; her affection for him was more doating than that she had ever held for any one else. She thought, too, he would be so pleased to see her now—so proud to see all the splendour that surrounded her, little dreaming that the wealth that dazzled her senses with almost an agony of pleasure would wring from his great manly heart the tears of sorrow and regret.

Seven days out of the ten soon fled, and Anne was still occupied with her people at the Hyde, still undergoing certain daily lessons in "court etiquette and drawing-room conduct and propriety," and so forth, all given with much freedom by Madame Marville, who considered she was toiling for the benefit of society, and giving ample value for the eight hundred pounds and a home.

Mrs. Darian paid her usual daily visit, and Anne ran over—which means she drove in a brougham—to Rook Farm to see her father, and still Will had not returned.

They heard from Squire Lynn that he was safe, and that was all.

When Anne returned in the evening Madame Marville laid before her a fashionable newspaper, in which was an announcement of the coming marriage, and wherein Anne found herself spoken of as if she were some wonderful celebrity.

On the seventh she spent her last evening as Anne Darian at home.

She knew that on the morrow she would have scarcely time to take a parting—her parents knew it too.

They had been invited to be at the Hyde, where a room was prepared for them, to see Anne for a few minutes; but Mrs. Darian, with her natural foresight, declined the offer.

"We will be at the church, darling," she said, speaking, as married ladies mostly do, for husband and self. "We may be able to snatch a parting caress from you; but to-night we must say all we have to say, and look upon you as gone—for a time."

"Only for four months, darling mamma," answered Anne, weeping, as ladies in similar circumstances usually do, and without knowing why. "Warton only speaks of a four months' trip, that will not be long; but I seem now, mamma and dear father, to cling to the darling old home more than ever. I can't say that I would forego my marriage quite for it, but I should like to cling to both; you understand me?"

"Quite well, darling," was the mother's answer, and spoken out gaily, gallantly, though the tears were stopping up the very vessels of her heart and choking her. "It is a pleasure to us to know that the feeling of love for the old homestead still remains, but it is a greater pleasure for us to know that you will exchange this quiet, dull home for one so far, far better, so far, far more suitable to our little queen, and that the change will come so soon. Heaven bless you, my pet darling! you need never know one hour of sorrow from this night—not one hour of misery, one of pain. Heaven grant that the sunshine that has burst down upon you may ever be as unclouded as it is our hope it may be. Bless you again and again."

The mother's blessing, conveyed in many heartfelt words, was seconded by a silent, fervent embrace from the father, a low, husky farewell and painful shivering of the great broad chest, and then he tore himself away, while Anne, blinded with tears, was led to the carriage and driven quickly away to await the eventful morrow.

The morrow came; visitors who were to be at the breakfast came; the Duke of Dabblacourt, fussy, flurried and full of compliments, came; the carriages stood in front of the entrance of the Hyde, and Anne attired with the splendour that was worthy a princess, was waiting anxiously for the return of her to-be husband.

The time was up for starting; still he did not come. Twenty minutes of anxious, agonizing waiting, and still he did not come. Had he gone on to the church? That was likely. Was it not wise to go there? suggested the bride.

Every one said "certainly," and the party drove off to the church, to find a crowd around its doors, the parents of the beautiful bride within, the minister attired and waiting, and still the intended husband had not come!

(To be continued.)

A FARMER in Slagelse, Denmark, has ploughed up in his field a beautifully preserved gold cup, of Byzantine workmanship. According to Berlingske, this remnant of the days when the Vikings spoiled Micklegarth will be secured for the Oldnordisk Museum in Copenhagen.

PEOPLE are still talking about the mishap to the Czar at Flushing. But nobody seems to have been

aware of the cause of his steamer sticking in the mud. We have all put it down to the carelessness of that pilot who is reported to have so quietly stolen overboard as soon as he found what he had done. But it does not seem to have been his fault. Flushing harbour is piloted at night by the aid of lights. When the Czar came out fires blazed out in all directions. The harbour was, in fact, illuminated. It is easy to understand that a general illumination hides particular lights. The pilot, having lost his only guide, deposited the steamer safely on a mud bank. That is the reason for the accident.

THE gentleman organ-grinder has been doing business at Bristol. The accounts say coins of the realm, from sovereigns to halfpennies, were bestowed upon him in a manner which surprises many beholders, and renders many a one indignant at such irrational squandering. This man appears especially to have the power of inducing ladies to give him money, and it is from their pockets the greatest number of sovereigns and half-sovereigns which he obtains proceed. When in the course of his peregrination through that town anything was given him, he doffed his hat and bowed in acknowledgment. In one case it is said that a poor woman having given him a penny, he gave her a shilling in return. Evidently it is not from the pence of the poor, but from the silver and gold of the rich, that he will win his wager, if he wins it at all.

"ALONE."

ALONE I sit in silence here
And think of days ago,
Whose hopes were bright as autumn skies,
When sunlight gilds the dawn:
I sail away in vision's bark
Out o'er a troubled sea,
To where the "Isles of Long Ago"
Lie calmly waiting me.

The harbour gained, my boat at rest,
I roam the islands o'er
To seek the gems that line the shelves
Of memory's golden store;
I find the home where childhood's hours
Were whiled in peace away,
With all its trees and blooming flowers
Untouched by stern decay.

My brother's voice and sister's call
Now echo from the glen,
And bid me come where childish sports
Are pure and free again.
We toss the ball and make the swing,
And climb the forest trees;
Then shoot the dart and fly the kite
Upon the rising breeze.

My dream is o'er; with aching breast
I find myself alone;
While all the joys of brighter days
Like autumn birds have flown.
Yes, all are gone! I've seen the last
Of youthful hopes decline,
Whose sadness strikes no other heart
And sweet to none—but mine.

W. M. F.

A STRONG detachment—twenty-nine—of the Queen's Edinburgh Rifle Brigade have entered themselves to compete for the Queen's Prize and St. George's Trophy at Wimbledon. The Queen's Prize winner of last year—Sergeant A. Menzies, a Perthshire man—is amongst the number.

A LETTER from Venice states that in consequence of the heavy rains the Piazza St. Marc has been inundated, and the water has risen so high as to permit a light boat to be rowed over the square. All the high grounds in the neighbourhood of Florence were covered with snow.

A FRENCH ex-chef d'orchestre has counted the number of notes in Meyerbeer's "Huguenots," and estimates them at 43,720, not including the overture, entr'actes, and ballet. The third act contains the largest number, 13,344; the second, the next, 10,673; and the last act the smallest amount, 3,665. The "Blessing of the Daggers" contains 3,101, the septett 2,402, and the "Rataplan" chorus, 1,297.

DISCOVERY OF BRONZE COINS.—The discovery has just been made in France at Amigny Rony, in the department of the Aisne, by a farmer named Delamotte Lavasseur, of 900 bronze coins ranging from Diocletian to Constantine I. They were found near the strategical road constructed by the Romans to connect the Suessiones with the Viromandi, in passing by Contra Aegnum, the station which protected the passage of the Oise.

OUT of the twenty-three millions of people inhabiting England and Wales, not half a million pay Income Tax—the number, to state it with exactness, is 417,540. The numbers who pay this tax seem to bear a proper proportion to the size and wealth of our large towns. Thus, London heads the list, over 25,000 persons paying Income Tax there. Liverpool,

Manchester, Birmingham, Leeds, and Bristol follow in proper sequence.

WHO WAS DOMINIE SAMPSON?—None of Scott's biographers seem to have known who was the original Dominie Sampson. A border gentleman resident in Edinburgh, William Oliver, Esq., formerly of Langraw, Roxburghshire, and a kinsman of Sir Walter Scott, has recently been clearing this matter up. He says the original Dominie was a Mr. Samson, a lieutenant of the Church of Scotland, and for some time tutor in the family of Mr. Thomas Scott, who was Sir Walter's eldest uncle, and Mr. Oliver's maternal grandfather. The likeness is perfect of the great shambling, awkward, sand-blind, harmless simpleton, and, withal, scholar, even to the pronunciation of "Prodigious."

THE TIME WILL COME.

WAIT and hope. How much is contained in those words! How many people wait, when they see plank after plank slip slowly but surely from under their tired feet! Then, one by one, their hopes are destroyed, and their false friends turn indifferently away from them in the hour of need. Still, with unconquerable spirits, they wait for better days, trusting with unflinching trust that those days will come. And they will.

Oh, poor pilgrims in life's dreary waste, have courage! Fight life's battle with brave, strong hearts, and when the end comes you will find peace. Is it not better, when we are nearing the "shadowy vale," waiting for the reaper to close our eyes for our last long sleep, to feel that we tried to be true, and that, if there was sin committed, it was not our sin? This side of the hill we must climb is dark and rough, and as we look about us, our dimmed eyes can see no glimmer of light, no smooth place for our weary feet; but if we would only trust Him a little longer—only had the faith to tread the path before us with patience and endurance, on the other side we should find rest.

A PUBLIC library has been established by the Viceroy of Egypt at Cairo. In it have been gathered all the most ancient manuscripts of the Koran that could be found, including "the true one," dating from the year A.D. 720.

In the year ending the 31st of March last the fines and penalties at the Metropolitan police courts amounted to 1,396l. 9s. 8d., which was paid over to the Exchequer. The largest amount was at Great Marlborough Street, 1,949l. 13s. 3d.

A PRIZE of the value of 40l. is offered by the Berlin Academy of Sciences for the best essay on the physical and chemical conditions of steel and the changes to which it is liable. The papers are to be sent in prior to March, 1876.

At a dance given to the Royal servants at Balmoral Castle the other night the queen entered heartily into the festivities, and honoured the servants by taking part in the dance. For partners Her Majesty had the two eldest sons of the Prince of Wales.

THE parishioners of St. Mark's, Victoria Park, have been the fortunate recipients of a munificent donation from the Queen, in commemoration of Her Majesty's visit to that park on the 2nd of April last year. The gift consists of a clock, showing the time on three dials, and propelling a chiming machine for eleven hemispherical bells.

A GERMAN naturalist thus translates the song of the nightingale: "Zozozozozozozozozoz—Zirrhading—Hexezezezezezezezezez cowa he dze hoi—Hi gai gai gai gai gai gai guai gai—Coricor diao diao pi." Any of our readers wishing to emulate the sweet songstress of the night need only to practise the lay as above.

A NUMBER of gentlemen, members of a club appropriately named "The Ariel," start from England for a bicycle tour in France. They go by way of Newhaven and Dieppe, and will travel on their mechanical steeds through some of the most interesting localities of Normandy and the north to Paris, and back by Amiens and Boulogne, returning to Dover after the lapse of about a fortnight.

THE Oratorians have determined on building a magnificent new church on the fine site of the present Oratory, at Brompton. The church is to be built in the Renaissance style, and to be surmounted by a splendid dome. The Duke of Norfolk has promised to contribute the munificent sum of 20,000l. It is estimated that the church will cost not far short of 100,000l., and will take three years in building.

LORD SHAFTESBURY recently stated, at a public meeting in London, that, from personal observation he had ascertained that of the adult male criminals of that city nearly all had fallen into a course of crime between the ages of eight and sixteen years; and that if a young man lived an honest life up to twenty-five years of age, there were then forty-nine chances in his favour, and only one against him, as to an honourable life hereafter.



[SUPPLIANT AT A FATHER'S FEET.]

THE DOUBLE BONDAGE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"The Lost Coronet," "Elgiva," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XLVII.

The rose was yet upon her cheek.
But mellowed with a tenderer streak.
Where was the play of her soft lips fled?
Gone was the smile that enlivened their red.
The ocean's calm within its view
Beside her eye had less of blue,
But like that cold wave it stood still,
And its glance though clear was chill.

RAYMOND LESTER was alone, yet perhaps we may scarcely use that epithet, for his own sad, miserable thoughts were and had been but too long companions of his solitude.

The room was peopled, so to speak, with the images of the past, the forms of those he had loved but too well, for whom he had sinned only too deeply. The form of Laura de Fontane, of his own dead wife, was mistily connected with the lovely face and figure of his own beloved child.

It was perhaps a retribution for the past that Gwenda, the sole object of long years' toil and self-denial and thought and love, should have shrunk in terror and in shame from his fatherly love, his lavish treasure, his earnest prayers for pardon and for filial sympathy and affection.

Crushed, bowed, despairing, did that lone man sit in the rustic Windsor chair that was the best resting-place in the humble cottage where Gilbert Dorrington's influence had procured him a safe refuge, the morning after that fatal interview.

He marked no time, there was nothing to interest him in its progress now. Death would have been welcome now that the only hope and stimulus of his life were gone, and the bright prospect of so many years culminated in a dark failure, a cloud that "could be felt," to use the phrase that so well describes the gloom of despair.

Poor Raymond! he had sinned; but for the heinous offence against man there should surely be some atonement possible.

And if ever poor mortal laboured for such an end, it was the repentant father of Gwenda Loraine.

"My child, my child, was it well done?" at length burst from his unconscious lips. "I know it was deserved, but not from you. Yet, my child, you had suffered for the father's sin. It is but meet you should return on his head your punishment."

"No, no, I was wrong, ungrateful, wicked!" sounded on the quiet atmosphere of the room.

And ere the bewildered man could be certain of the

reality of the vision a fair and loved form was kneeling at his feet, his hands were clasped in soft, warm palms, and pressed to full, rich lips that could never have conveyed such a thrill of rapture to any lover's breast as to that unhappy and prematurely old man.

He started from his abstraction, as if galvanized by an electric shock. His hands were withdrawn from his face, his eyes met with a wild incredulity that lovely, soft and sad look that spoke such a world of misery and of penitence.

"Gwenda, my child, my beloved, you cannot—you are but tantalizing me with the sweetness of a draught that I can never hope to quaff," he exclaimed, shrinking back. "Am I dreaming?" he added, abruptly.

"Yes, it is impossible; you shrink from me too lately for such a transformation as this."
"No, no, no! It is real—it is true," she gasped, sadly. "Father, take me to your heart, for I am sorely punished and desolate. At least, I have a right to your affection. Oh, do not chide, do not send me from you," she went on, wildly, as he still sat motionless, rigid and silent, his eyes wandering around as if he could not realize the possibility of that entrancing bliss.

But the last wailing cry, that pleading look, the movement that bowed the fair head on his knee in utter prostration and abasement woke him from the trance.

"My beloved, my treasure, my idol," he exclaimed, clasping the desolate girl to his bosom with an almost reverent tenderness that had at once a mother's cherishing softness and a father's strong, protecting care. "Oh, Gwenda, I am only worthy of your affection because I have toiled long years to make your happiness. But, oh! my poor, injured one, it has been in vain, and worse than vain," he went on, sadly. "Your reproach was but too just, poor child. I was but sharpening the dagger that has stabbed you to the heart's core."

"Hush! I was wicked to say it," she murmured, in the same subdued tone that she had used during the interview. "But," she went on, suddenly, "please tell me the truth—did that dreadful man speak right? Are you in danger, my father? Can they take you, punish you, at their will?"

He smiled sadly, though his eyes seemed to beam with a sunny light as he gazed on her.

"Perhaps," he said, "there may be some justice in his threat; but I should fear nothing were no evil agent employed against me. The government are not very severe where there has been no real fresh violation of the law, and I have committed none, save in leaving the country of my exile before the time. But,

Gwenda, I will guard my life now that you have made it precious by your love and pardon. Yes, even in a distant land, I shall carry away with me the blessing of my child's forgiveness and her filial love."

"No," she said, firmly, "I will not be parted from you, father." And the name seemed to come from her lips with a mighty effort as she spoke. "If you must fly, I will go with you. If the wealth for which you have toiled is not your own I will leave it all and work for you even as you have toiled for me."

The large tears came rushing into his manly eyes. "Poor darling, that still remains a question," he said. "Mr. Dorrington has told me he will use the very utmost of his influence on my behalf, or rather on yours, to obtain the legalization of your inheritance. And in any case you can but retain it till the very last, till the worst is known, my poor darling. It may never be necessary to make the sacrifice."

She shook her head impatiently.

"No, no," she cried, hurriedly. "I cannot keep it. It seems to choke me in its very atmosphere—all that belongs to it is hateful till you are free from danger," she added, in the constrained tone that betrays a fear of transgressing against the hearer's feelings.

"But, Gwenda, my child, it has been earned by my own toil under Heaven's blessing," he said. "It is yours as my gift, my dowry to you. Why should you cast it from you as worthless?"

"No, not worthless," she cried, eagerly, "but if it is not lawfully yours, and if you are not free to give and to share it, I am too proud, if you will, or too silly to retain it or touch one penny of its income. Father, let us go away," she added, hurriedly, "let us go to distant lands where we are not known, and I will return your generous devotion as I best can. And it will make me happier," she continued, impatiently. "I must do something to forget, something to redeem. I will win a name, my father, or we will both sink into the grave," she added, in a subdued tone.

There was a feverish flush on her cheeks that told of the unnatural excitement within, and Raymond Lester sighed deeply as he gazed.

"Poor child, poor child; and it is my work," he murmured.

But there was no possibility of rebutting her pleading arguments. They had, perhaps, only too true a response in his own experience.

"What would you do, then? What is it you are planning in this young brain?" he said, placing his hand on her fair head, and bending over her with half-pitying anxiety.

"I would work, but I can tell you nothing yet."

she said, quickly. "I have a promise, which, if it be fulfilled, can carry out all I want. But are you safe here, father? Is there no fear that you may be discovered?" she suddenly exclaimed, looking round the rustic tenement.

"I have a secure place of retreat were it to be tested," he replied, cheerfully. "And that noble-hearted cousin of a craven renegade has made arrangements which would give me notice of any such danger for the next day or two. How long will your doubts and hopes last?" he added, with a mournful smile. "When will my darling be persuaded of their truth or folly?"

"Oh, soon—very soon," she said, quickly, "and meanwhile I will prepare all for our journey, father. It will be so strange, will it not?" she went on, with a wistful sadness in her look and tone—"so strange for me to be with you in our long, long journey."

"Hush! my child, hush!" he said, soothingly. "Please Heaven, you will be comforted and rewarded for this generous sacrifice, and if a father's prayers and blessings can avail my child may be happy yet."

"Yes, yes—oh, yes—very happy," she said, in the same hurried tone. "But now I must go, you know; Mrs. Fenton will wonder where I am, and I must not offend her."

Raymond Lester's former days seemed returning to him as he watched the refined, fair girl he called daughter. The instincts of his early training, his young habits were strong within him in spite of his rough, degrading life and associations of the past few years, and he could appreciate better the full sacrifice she would be called upon to make than the returned convict, the ticket-of-leave man could have been supposed to do.

"Child," he said, solemnly, "you are a noble creature, and some day this severe training may yet prove to be a blessing in disguise. But as to this Mrs. Fenton, what of her? Does she dare to affect any authority over your movements? and who gave her that power, I should ask?"

"I do not trust her," she said, shaking her head. "There seems some strange influence at work over all that I have done, which I can only suppose is owing to her knowledge of my plans. However, it is over, quite over, now," she went on, bitterly. "I have but to guard against her for a few brief days and then whoever has employed her will be left to complete their arrangements at their leisure. I suppose, in any case, all the expenses of the establishment will be paid," she added, with a smile that had more despair than gladness in its expression.

There were a few more rapid words, some last promises, and then Gwendolene flew away like a lapwing.

She found a species of relief in motion, and her frame seemed insensible to the fatigue that in happier times would have crushed it to the very earth with simple exhaustion. And when she at length arrived at her splendid home there was even a species of relief at the sight of a carriage standing at the door that she at once recognized as Mr. St. John's.

"Please, Miss Lorraine, Mr. St. John is in the grounds. He said he would wait a short time for you, but not in the house; he seemed to wait air, he said," was the rather puzzled remark of the servant who was waiting for his young mistress at the hall door.

Gwendolene gave a hurried response, and sprang away when once out of sight of her domestic towards a summer-house that she knew was a very favourite resort of her kindly old friend.

Her instincts did not deceive her. No sooner did she come in sight of the pretty rustic temple than she perceived the tall, thin figure of the old gentleman watching for her from the open door, and in another instant she was at his side.

"Well, my dear, I am taking an unwarrantable liberty with your domain, I have no doubt; but I did not want to leave your duenna as my hostess, which might have been the case if I had remained within doors, so I established myself here till you came. And now, first, have you changed your mind in this mad scheme of yours?" he went on.

"I have rather been strengthened than the reverse," she said, firmly. "Mr. St. John, you will not betray my trust when I tell you that it is, in every probability, a necessity for me to attempt what I propose. You will not doubt my true, solemn words, even though I cannot explain myself?" she went on, looking up in his face with her splendid eyes all moist with eager emotion.

He did not—he could not—doubt her, and with a warm, silent pressure of her hand and a kindly smile that said more than words he led her farther into the summer-house, and sat down beside her.

"See here," he began, "I have succeeded almost beyond my hopes in the offer I have obtained for you, though you may consider it rather a doubtful and unpromising one. A professor who has prepared

several pupils successfully for the stage, some of whom I have heard during the past few years in my trips abroad, informs me that there will be a very good opening for a young lady in the winter at San Carlos, provided she is thoroughly trained and would not object to placing herself under his supervision there, and it is my idea and his also that the opportunity may be favourable for you if you can in the meantime pay all necessary expenses by singing at concerts and festivals under his auspices and assisting him in teaching his less advanced pupils."

He gave her a sharp, searching look as he spoke. Perhaps he hoped that the proposal might daunt the petted heiress and induce her to at once throw up the wild scheme.

But if it was really as a test of her sincerity, it certainly did not fail.

She looked eagerly up in his face. "Oh, I am glad, so glad," she said, quickly. "The more employment I have the better it will be for me. It will make me forget, make me happy," she went on, in an undertone.

"And do you mean to find pleasure in fame, and only fame?" he asked, earnestly.

"Perhaps," she said, "perhaps. That is, at least, tangible; it cannot be taken away, can it? It must be glorious to be worshipped, I suppose," she went on, "it will fill up the void, will it not, Mr. St. John?"

"Poor child. Heaven grant it may, for I can see the young heart is sorely torn and desolate," he said. "And now for the more definite arrangements. What can I do to assist you in your journey to the South?"

"Nothing," she said, "nothing. I shall have a protector, a companion. Nay, do not look like that!" she exclaimed, suddenly, seeing the change in Mr. St. John's astonished looks. "It breaks my heart, for you are my only friend, and I am innocent of wrong—indeed, indeed I am—as your own daughter can be. Only, I am miserable and desolate even while striving to do my duty."

The momentary suspicion passed away at her frank, true words.

And the reply of that worthy, kindly heart was one to heal the deep wound that it had inflicted.

"Gwendolene Lorraine, if you are deceiving me the consequences will be on your own head, not mine. I do believe you from my heart to be true as my own Isabel. And even as I would desire should be done unto her so shall be my earnest desire to do unto you, the orphan and helpless one."

And with a fatherly, grave air that could not be misinterpreted by the most perverted mind, he bent forward and pressed his lips on the white, cool brow that had as yet no mark of care and sorrow lined on its smooth surface.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

Then shall the fury passions tear,
The vultures of the mind,
Disdainful anger, pallid fear,
And shame that lurks behind,
Or jealousy with rankling teeth,
And envy wan and faded care,
Grim-visaged, comfortless despair,
And sorrow's piercing dart.

"You have done well, Lord Saville, to trust yourself thus far to my guidance and honour," said Count Albert, haughtily, when the two so strangely connected were placed side by side in the seclusion of a first-class railway carriage.

Sholto gave a cold inclination of the head as he replied:

"I take little merit for what was in truth but a species of necessity, count. I certainly have no taste for notoriety, nor ambition to create a sensational scene in the neighbourhood of Lady Maud Dorrington's home. I am afraid you have little to do with my conduct in the matter," he continued, with a cold sneer on his handsome lips.

Count Albert appeared perfectly unmoved on the occasion.

"It is singular that there should be such an agreement between our ideas, and I may say our actions, my lord," he replied, quietly. "Poor Laura must certainly have recognized some such resemblance between us."

Lord Saville's face literally blazed with passion. "Be so good," he said, "as never to mention her name, lest you would have me lose all self-control and violate the reticence you admire. In all else I can listen to you unmoved."

"I fear that I must disobey your wishes in this matter, my lord," said Count Albert, calmly. "So much depends on what took place in regard to her, my poor lost one, that it is out of the question not to name her. And you have reason to be thankful that it does not create such a tempest of fury in me, her husband, as to make me ignore all but my injuries."

A gust of passion swept over Sholto's face that

literally blazed out from his eyes and flamed up in his cheeks.

"Man, do not drive me too far. Dare you say that you believe she or I ever injured you in thought or deed?" he exclaimed, fiercely.

The count laughed sardonically.

"Dare you, can you venture to assure me as a man of honour—I should say, so-called honour—that you did not love, that you did not feel anything for the deceased countess which Lady Maud's betrothed dared not avow to the husband of Laura de Fontaine?" he asked, coldly. "If so, I will at once give up all idea of trusting to the word of an English nobleman."

Sholto's face crimsoned, but this time with shame rather than anger.

"I can still keep to what I said," he returned. "I never dreamed of injury to you, nor would her pure mind have tolerated such an idea. But I do not pretend that I had no warmer feeling than mere friendly admiration. That were to commit a deeper sin than the involuntary love I felt for your wife."

It was difficult to resist the firm, frank, sad tone of the avowal.

And even the count preserved a rather confused and doubtful silence for some minutes.

"I will not pretend to say whether I believe you or not," he returned, at last. "Perhaps the law of the land and the voice of your fellow countrymen would be somewhat different to your own opinion in the matter. And it was on this point I wished to talk with you, my lord. I, like yourself, have no taste for scandal and notoriety, and I will not, if I can help it, drag my name and poor Laura's before the world and bring out all the miserable scandal that would belong to the exposure of your guilt."

"I confess none. I allow none. I fear no truth, if the truth alone could be sifted from the falsehood," was Lord Saville's firm reply.

Count Albert gave another of his cold, sneering laughs.

"Oh, indeed? Well, I suppose I ought at the least to appear credulous, lest I feel obliged to put the law in full force against my wife's murderer," he replied, coolly. "It is far more easy and agreeable for me to suppose that all is as you say, and that I am doing a very noble and just thing in permitting you to escape. However, I tell you frankly that all I do feel is sufficient love and consideration for her, poor, injured, misguided woman, to shield her memory from stigma and disgrace. And on certain conditions I will allow you to go free, and permit the law to be cheated of its prey, unless indeed its clutches you without my assistance."

Sholto shivered involuntarily at the cold, heartless contempt of the bland, soft-voiced villain, who from his very heart he believed to be dyed in sin and in treacherous cruelty.

"Listen to me, count," he said, severely, setting his mobile features so as to attract to the utmost the attention and belief of the slippery companion with whom he had to deal, and whose fangs, like the snake's, might at any instant poison his very blood. "You asked me but now whether I would yield to your conditions for the sake of my own safety. And I answer that I have no faith in your honour and promises. None! I have a strong, terrible suspicion that you have laid a deep and subtle plot against me and your deceased wife. I simply do not believe that her death was unknown or unexpected by you. And, what is more, I have a very fixed belief that there were ulterior intentions in your heart, which you still are busy in carrying out, and have not yet accomplished."

"Now," he went on, more calmly, "you have my real belief and sentiments, Count Albert, and you can meet me on equal terms. As to the rest, that remains to be seen whether the conditions you offer me can be accepted without loss of honour and the good name of an English nobleman."

There was a livid paleness, a sort of horrid flash in the face of the count as he calmly listened to this speech, but he gave no other sign of emotion till Lord Saville had done speaking.

Then he fixed his eyes on the ground for some minutes in silence.

"There need be little hesitation on your part, in my opinion, my lord," he said, at length. "There are but two absolute promises I wish to exact from you, at the price—I will not say of my assistance in your flight, but as the price of my silence as to your proceedings."

"And they, what are they?" asked Sholto, quickly.

"First, an absolute engagement to preserve an entire silence on all points connected with the murdered countess or myself, and your acquaintance with us. This is but a fair return to me, since I would not drag Laura's name before the public, and it is a useless sacrifice unless you are as much bound as myself."

Lord Saville shuddered.

"I am scarcely likely to volunteer anything on so painful a subject," he said, "but still there might be circumstances that would render some reply on my part necessary. It would be madness to let the engagement be binding in such an event."

"It must be at any rate till by my own lips or by my death I release you from the bond," returned the count, firmly. "And with it is connected another condition, and that is, that you do not take any steps whatever to bring about your marriage with Lady Maud Dorrington. Mark me, my lord," he added, as he saw the angry flush in his companion's cheeks, "mark me, I am better acquainted than you may be with all the circumstances of your engagement to that young lady. And I assure you the world will be made as fully acquainted with them as myself if you venture to provoke me in the matter."

Sholto guessed but too quickly the man's meaning, but he dared not, or would not give him an opportunity of explaining himself more clearly.

"We will not speak on that question, count," he said, coldly. "It is enough for you to insult me by thus intruding on my private affairs, without entering into details that are beneath a denial. As to the Lady Maud, I would never cast such a disgrace on her name as to draw her into a marriage with a suspected criminal. More than that I won't promise, not even to save my life."

"Then you love her—you love her!" exclaimed the count, impatiently.

"I," repeated Sholto, in a low, sad tone, "I love her? Alas, alas! I would not indeed cause the misery of any one, much more that noble-minded, gifted girl, and I cannot be capable of such wickedness."

"Then you absolutely decline. You refuse in any way or on any pretext to fulfil yourself the engagement that was made between you?" asked the count.

"I have said all that I mean to answer," returned the earl, gloomily.

"You consent to my conditions then? At least, that needs a very brief reply," persisted the count. "It would be only a common exercise of prudence, or even of regard to Lady Maud herself, since it would scarcely be pleasant for her to read the details of your trial, your possible condemnation and your death."

Sholto was no coward.

He would have faced death in most shapes without shrinking.

He would have fought a duel. He would have saved a life at the expense of his own, and never drawn a sigh nor blenched in look or word or gesture. But it was very different for him to face the terrible publicity, the disgrace, and the fearful death that would be the result of a hopeless attempt to prove his innocence.

And it was not difficult to persuade himself that the promise would rather benefit than injure the sweet and generous girl who had linked herself with his fortunes.

He would leave her free, quite free to forget him and to form a happier marriage, while the miserable wealth that had been the cause of so much unhappiness would be hers without any doubt and reservations as to her rights.

"Come," exclaimed the count, hurriedly, as the train whirled into the station, "come, your reply, my lord. I cannot wait longer in suspense, as I intend to change carriages here. Do you give me your solemn oath to observe these conditions so long as I claim your performance of them and my life may last?"

"I do," said the earl, quickly, "I do. It matters not what becomes of me, so that those whom I have injured are saved from shame or sorrow."

"Perhaps a foreign land may be best for your health till the affair has blown over," returned the count. "In a few months you can return and will find all forgotten and a new career open to you, in which case I shall expect your lasting and firm gratitude. Good-day, my lord. I have trusted your oath, but I think you are pretty well bound without any writing or witnesses to enforce it."

He jumped from the carriage with a careless bow, and disappeared among the crowd of passengers.

CHAPTER XLIX.

I spoke my thoughts, I sang my song,
Because I pined, felt and knew.
I never glorified a wrong,

Or sang approval of th' untrue.
And if I touched the people's heart,
Is that a crime in true men's eyes?
Or desecration of an art?

That speaks to people's sympathies?

THE brilliant sun of an Italian sky had set, and the inhabitants of the gay city of Naples were emerging from their cool retreats, like birds from the thick boughs of sheltering trees, to repair to their

varied scenes of amusement or of health-seeking duty, and the carriages of the richer and more gently-bred citizens and strangers were all directed to one especial focus—the opera, that was already opening for the season, before its chief stars should be called from the fair queen of the south to the city that boasts itself as the arbiter of fashion and elegance throughout the world, or, in other words, from Naples to Paris.

The attraction was new and powerful at this moment.

There was to be a new singer, a new actress, and the excitable and musical Italians were worked up to fever-heat by the reports which reached them of the attractions of the debutante.

Some said she was the daughter of a gentleman of rank, others that she had left her home from pure passion for the stage, or else from a passion for a forbidden love; and a third legion decided that she was a foundling or an orphan, who had been stolen away from her home in the hope of making a fortune by her beauty and talent.

But however diverse the tales, all converged into this one: that there was something very unusual about the "new girl," and that if any mystery did attach to her, it was certainly one not degrading in any respect to the young stranger, but only adding poignancy and zest to the natural charms she might possess.

The opera chosen for the girl's début was the "Lucia di Lammermoor," that exquisite production which gives so much scope for the grace and beauty and girlish talent of the heroine to find full play.

And when at last the overture had ceased and the curtain drew up to reveal the sweet young love of Edgardo to an admiring audience, when the fresh, fair young loveliness of the new actress was combined with a voice and method that in itself would have covered a multitude of sins, then as the performance went on, as the richness of the girl's tones, the faultless intonation, and the natural acting in each fresh scene and act alike won amateurs and the public, then the enthusiasm kindled to fever heat, and the applause swelled in the air till it became well-nigh deafening.

And the Signora Bianca, as she was called in the bills, was forced to appear and to courtesy her thanks again and again as the audience welcomed her as only a southern, impetuous enthusiasm can vent its effervescence on a favourite.

It little knew the emptiness even of such an ovation to that sad heart. It little guessed that the fair young Scottish girl whom the piece portrayed had scarcely a sadder heart than the English beauty who so vividly embodied the griefs of the victim of a parent's tyranny.

And as Gwenda, for it was she, gracefully and calmly bowed her thanks, they might well have wondered at her self-possession, had it not been for the very dignity of sorrow which deadened the excitement that might otherwise have fluttered and overpowered by its very novelty.

At last it was over, that trying ordeal.

The curtain dropped on the enraptured audience. The last recall was obeyed, the shower of bouquets gathered up.

Some of them indeed contained gifts far more worthy of the recipient than the mere floral offerings, which yet befit the youth and blooming freshness of the new star.

There were jewels and scent-bottles, and other graceful trifles that are supposed to adorn the apartments and the toilet of a young and lovely woman, enclosed in the handsome bouquets which were thrown at the feet of Gwenda Lorraine, the "Signora Bianca."

Never was a reception more enthusiastic, and never perhaps had it been accorded to a more saddened, though no more grateful heart.

There was one in the audience who had not shared in the ovation by voice or action, and yet his eyes and ears had been actually entranced during the whole performance, either through admiration or some stronger feeling.

He was English certainly in features and in the hue of his hair, eyes, and skin.

But still the dress was decidedly foreign, and the accent in which he at last spoke was correct and pure as almost to belie the idea that he could have known any other birthplace than sunny Italy.

"Who is the signora? Does any one know where she lives?" he asked of a gentleman whom he recognized as a well-known habitué of the opera, and with whom he had been exchanging a few words of criticism during the performance.

"Oh, yes; it is not difficult to ascertain the residence of such a star," he returned, shrugging his shoulders. "They cannot conceal themselves, these opera favourites, in a cave or a convent. The signora lives at Castel-a-Mare. It is some distance from here, but she can hire a carriage

till she keeps her own, which, to judge from to-night, will not be very long. She may command any terms now," he added, quickly, "such as is so often the case. They say she has some cormorant in the shape of a father or uncle or guardian to eat up her gains. I have been a regular attendant at the opera in whatever country I happened to reside for the last twenty years, but I never could understand why all our fair flowers had such hungry worms in the bud to eat up their nourishment and drain them of their very hearts' blood."

"It seems a hard fate certainly, and does that belong to the Signora Bianca?" asked the first speaker.

"Decidedly. At least there is always some elderly man dogging her steps and watching like a ghost every one that comes near her, so that one may fairly assign to him such a character in the drama. Is it not so, signor?" returned the Italian, with a grim smile.

"Probably. He will be here to-night then, I suppose?" asked the Englishman. "I should like to see the man, signor."

"Certainly. You can, I daresay, see him by going to the stage entrance, where the carriage will be waiting," was the response, "and you should be quick, for she always leaves very abruptly after a rehearsal, and I doubt not she will be greatly fatigued now and anxious to return home."

The Englishman expressed his thanks and sauntered to the spot indicated by his companion without farther delay.

There was a close carriage in waiting, with a well-appointed pair of horses, and coachman and groom that had more an English than a foreign air in all its faultless belongings.

The young man drew back somewhat in the shelter of the portico so as to be effectually concealed by the crowd that were waiting the exit of the evening's heroine.

There was a slight rustle, an indescribable hush of voices and sounds in the hall, and then the light, girlish figure appeared, leaning, as had been predicted by the Italian, upon the arm of a worn and elderly man who yet had more the appearance of labour and sorrow than of age on his lined face.

They hurried past without vouchsafing a glance to the right or left.

But there was time for the stranger to catch a full view of the features of both, and he turned away in deep thought.

"Can it be?" he muttered, "can it be? I am sure it is she, poor Maud's friend. But yet, if I am not grievously deceived, if my memory does not entirely play me false, that is Raymond Lester, and I knew him in my boyhood and early youth. Yet he is changed, fearfully changed, but that it is he I do not, I cannot doubt. Still, it were worth while and no very difficult task, to test the truth of my belief."

He turned away, but only to secure one of the old-fashioned facres that abound in the vicinity, and to offer extra money if the carriage before them were only kept well in view.

The avare of an Italian driver is something wonderful in its unbounded rapacity for gain, and the unlucky animals were pushed off at an increased speed and energy.

Meanwhile the unconscious objects of the pursuit were exchanging brief but absorbing questions and replies.

"Gwenda, my precious one, I was at once proud and disgusted this night. I could have proclaimed the gifted one, with a stentorian voice, as my child; and yet the necessity for such exertions and display covered me with shame," said the broken voice of Raymond Lester, when once fairly out of the gaping crowd.

Gwenda's eyes were downcast.

She lay, half-exhausted and weary, in a corner of the carriage, and it was apparently with an effort that she spoke.

"It was good, oh, yes, good for me. I was glad for you. But I am very tired," she said, languidly.

"Then it will kill you; you shall not risk it. I can see it already is wearing, crushing your young life," he returned, impetuously. "And all for me—and my sin."

"No, no, no!" she replied, with a generous warmth. "I am happy with you, father. I never dreamed to love you. I know I have a right to your affections; and it is pleasant to feel I am of use, and that I can conquer the shame and command the homage of the world. For your sake I am glad; but I am weary."

She closed her eyes once more, and seemed to sink into a quiet slumber, that lasted till they reached Castel-a-Mare, and soon were at the gate of their pretty though unpretending house.

Raymond Lester had watched her by the light of the flashing lamps of their carriage with a deep, yearning tenderness that brought back youth to his worn features.

"Alas, alas!" he said. "Another victim. Is a curse to rest on all I ever loved on earth?"

But the stopping of the carriage roused the sleeping girl, and with a sudden start she sprang from the carriage ere her father could assist her to alight, and flinging as it were a kiss and a "good night" to him as she ran up the marble steps, she disappeared within the hall.

The father ascended more deliberately, but so much engrossed with his own thoughts that he either did not heed the steps that followed him or else he supposed them to be those of the coachman or one of the servants of the house. Nor was it till he had fairly entered the hall, and passed on to the sitting-room, that was his own chosen retreat, that he perceived another figure had followed him to the apartment and stood within the full light of the lamps that burned from candelabra on the marble slabs.

Raymond started violently as the truth at last dawned upon him.

He was too surrounded by terrors and dangers not to be alarmed by any unusual occurrence. And though the door of the saloon was open and servants within call, he gazed wildly on his companion, as if he feared some murderous attack at his hands.

"Do not be disturbed; I think you scarcely seem to recognize me, Mr. Lester," said a deep, low voice. "And yet I should have known you anywhere—even at this distance of time."

The tones, the features, were certainly not unfamiliar to the unhappy fellow, as he ever remembered was his terrible appellation.

He gazed earnestly on the strange visitor, as if he were beginning to recall his identity, and decide what amount of danger there might be in his advent.

At last the truth dawned upon him with a sickening vividness, a truth that brought back the most painful hour of his life, and the crime that he perhaps repented more bitterly than the sin which had brought him to a prison.

"Can it be?—is it—Sholto Balfour?" he gasped.

"The same, though under another name," replied the visitor, calmly. "I am called Lord Saville now; but, alas! there is little happiness in the empty coronet. And even you might scarcely care to change places with me in my sorrowful life."

(To be continued.)

A new method of turning an honest penny has been put in practice in Edinburgh. For the sum of sixpence 24 sheets of letter paper are sold, each of them embossed with a penny stamp, but also with two inside pages filled with advertisements, the charge for which enables the seller to dispose of them on the convenient terms stated. Another sheet of paper can be enclosed along with the stamped sheet, without going beyond the permissible ounce weight which a penny stamp carries through the post office. The inventor has taken out a copyright, which gives him a year's monopoly.

PRODUCE OF IRELAND.—The constabulary returns, based upon information obtained from farmers and other, and revised by Boards of Guardians, show that it may be estimated that Ireland produced, in the year 1873, 469,563 qrs. of wheat, 6,912,765 qrs. of oats, 6,016,539 qrs. of barley, 25,576 qrs. of bere and rye, 48,375 qrs. of beans and peas, 2,383,060 tons of potatoes, 4,429,967 tons of turnips, 515,690 tons of mangold wurzel, 278,923 tons of cabbage, 19,843 tons of flax, and 3,306,163 tons of hay. Ireland had also in 1873, 4,142,400 head of cattle, 4,482,053 sheep, 532,146 horses, and 1,042,244 pigs. The extent of land under cereal crops decreases, but the produce in 1873 shows an increase of 263,845 qrs. over the preceding years. The acreage under potatoes has been decreasing for the last two years, but the produce in 1873 showed a large increase over 1872, and there was a greatly increased product also of turnips, mangold wurzel, and flax, but the yield of hay was not so good as in 1872. The returns show a million more head of cattle, and above a million more sheep than there were ten years previously.

A GERMAN paper publishes a statement concerning the increase that has taken place in the armies of Europe since 1859. The forces of Austria have, it says, increased by 222,530, and amount at present to 856,980 men; Russia has augmented her armies, which now number 1,519,810 men, by 295,660; Italy counts 287,550 more soldiers than in 1859, and her present aggregate military strength is 605,200 men; the German empire can summon to the field 1,261,160 men, an increase of 424,360 since the abolition of the old Federal Constitution. The French army, 977,669 stronger, is greater by 337,100 than that maintained by Louis Napoleon, and under the new army organisation is steadily increasing. Great Britain, including volunteers, has added 233,020 to the total of her land forces, which now include 478,820 men. The Swedish army of 204,510 has been augmented by 69,901; the Belgian army of

93,590, by 13,340; and the Dutch army of 64,320, by 5,770 men. Denmark alone has diminished her war power, her present army of 48,700 being less by 8,850 men than in 1859. These figures bring out the startling conclusion that the additions to these armies during the last fifteen years amount to no less than 1,889,990 men, and that the number of soldiers of all descriptions at present at the disposal of the different governments of Europe shows a grand total of 6,110,690. In the Austrian army, to every 1,000 combatant foot soldiers there are 103 cavalry and four field guns; in the European army of Russia, 187 cavalry and four guns; in the army of Asia, 910 horsemen and three guns; in the Italian army, 57 cavalry and three guns; in the German, 117 cavalry and three guns; in the French, 119 and five guns; in the English, 133 and four guns.

SCIENCE.

NEW PROTECTING COMPOUND FOR IRON SHIPS.—Dissolve thirty-four ounces of shellac in eighty ounces of wood alcohol, which should be allowed to stand about twenty-four hours. Then add thirty ounces of Venetian red, and thirty-five ounces of sulphate of lime, and thoroughly mix by passing it through a paint mill.

DYES FROM SAWDUST.—A new process has been patented for obtaining dyes from sawdust. The sawdust is heated with caustic soda, and flower of sulphur. A sulphide of sodium is thus produced, which, reacting on the organic matter, dehydrogenates it with the evolution of sulphuretted hydrogen. The resulting material is a dye stuff, said to have a strong affinity for organic fibres; and, by varying the proportion of the materials, different tints are produced.

CEMENT FOR MENDING STEAM BOILERS.—Mix 2 parts of finely powdered litharge with 1 part of very fine sand, and 1 part of quicklime which has been allowed to slack spontaneously by exposure to the air. This mixture may be kept for any length of time without injuring. In using it, a portion is mixed into paste with linseed oil, or, still better, boiled linseed oil. In this state it must be quickly applied, as it soon becomes hard.

A NEW NEEDLE.—A lady in San Francisco has invented a new needle, the improvement consisting in making a needle of any size without an eye for the thread, but with, instead, a hole bored longitudinally into the head or larger end thereof, to the depth of a quarter of an inch or thereabouts, which hole is arranged with a screw thread. The needle, it is claimed, will carry any kind of thread, and can be used for every purpose. It is thought that it will be valuable also as a surgical needle, as it will require but one thread, the advantage of which will be that a smaller hole will be made in passing the needle through any substance than would have to be made by the partially doubled thread of the ordinary eye needle.

AN ALCOHOL AND VINEGAR POLYPUS.—The Jardin d'Acclimatation of Paris was recently presented with a medusan polypus, which, on its reception, was placed in a tank of water with similar organisms. To the surprise of the curators of the aquaria, it was found that after the lapse of twenty-four hours the creature had killed every other occupant of the vessel, and remained alone in the midst of a quite large empty space. After some speculation over the apparent mystery, the analysis of the water was made, proving that the liquid was water no longer, but vinegar. The polypus, it appeared, was one of a very rare species of mollusc, which when placed in pure water, has the property of changing the same into a strongly characterized acetic solution. The animal, it is said, produces alcohol, which it transforms into vinegar.

FLOATING PARTICLES IN THE AIR.—When a ray of sunlight crosses a shaded room an immense number of fine particles will be noted, apparently in suspension therein. M. Tissandier has recently made some investigations into the quantity of this dust contained in 35·3 cubic feet of air by causing that quantity of air to pass through a tube packed with gun cotton, which filtered out the particles. He afterwards dissolved the gun cotton in ether, and thus was enabled to obtain the particles in a separated condition. After a heavy rain, M. Tissandier has collected '09 grains of dust in the above-mentioned quantity of air, but during dry weather this proportion rose to '3 of a grain. With regard to the nature of the material, he found that about one-third was organic, another third silicious, and the rest composed of various substances and sulphate and oxide of iron.

THE PURITY OF GOLD.—The purity of gold is still denoted by the use of the term carat. This word, like the troy grain and the Latin siliqua, is thought originally to have denoted a seed, which taken for the unit in weight, appears to have been the basis of the ancient Chaldean system of weights. As a

positive dimension, it is now only commonly used by the diamond merchant. Four diamond grains go to one diamond carat, which is the equivalent of 3·2 grains Troy. But the term is still employed to denote the purity of gold. Absolutely pure gold is said to be 24 carats fine. It is a curious fact that this weight of 24 carats, if taken as a positive quantity, of 76·8 grains Troy, is exactly the fifth part of the Sela, or silver unit, which was introduced into Palestine after the conquest of Babylon by the Persians. This coin was one-fifth part heavier than the shekel, the silver unit which prevailed from the earliest known times down to those of the Persian empire. And the Daric, or gold coin of the Persians, specimens of which exist in our museums, has a distinct relation of weight and of value to the Sela of 384 Troy grains of silver.

PHOSPHORIC ACID ON OATS.—E. Wolf describes water culture experiments in which the nourishing solutions, eight in number, supplied graduated quantities of phosphoric acid. The percentage of phosphoric acid in the dry crop varied with the amount supplied. When this percentage fell below 0·33 (with good field oats it is about 0·44) the amount of straw seriously diminished, but an increase of phosphoric acid above this point did not increase the straw. The corn, however, was greatly affected by an increased supply, and gave by much the largest yield when the phosphoric acid reached 1·11 per cent. of the dry crop. The ash of the straw contained no silica, none having been supplied; its percentage of phosphoric acid was 4·4—18·9, that in the ash of field oats (silica deducted) being 9·1. In the ash of the corn, the phosphoric acid varied only from 37·7—43·9 per cent., the percentage in the ash of field oats being 41·3.

TESTING DYES FOR ADULTERATION.—Red dyes must neither colour soap and water nor lime water, nor must they themselves become yellow or brown after boiling. This test shows the presence or absence of Brazil wood, archil, safflower, sandal wood, and the aniline colours. Yellow dyes must stand being boiled with alcohol, water, and lime water. The most stable yellow is madder yellow; the least stable are anatto and turmeric; fustic is rather better. Blue dyes must not colour alcohol reddish, nor must they decompose on boiling with hydrochloric acid. The best purple colours are composed of indigo and cochineal, or purpurin. The former test applies also to them. Orange dyes must colour neither water nor alcohol on boiling; green, neither alcohol nor hydrochloric acid. Brown dyes must not lose their colour on standing with alcohol, or on boiling with water. If black colours have a basis of indigo, they turn greenish or blue on boiling with sodium carbonate; if the dye be pure gall nuts, it turns brown. If the material changes to red on boiling with hydrochloric acid, the colouring matter is logwood without a basis of indigo, and is not durable. If it changes to blue, indigo is present.

GALVANIC ELECTRICITY WITHOUT CHEMICAL ACTION.—Mr. Fleming has constructed a new battery, in which the metallic contact of dissimilar metals is entirely avoided. The arrangement consists of thirty-six test tubes of dilute nitric acid, and the same number of tubes of sodium pentasulphide, all well insulated, alternating with one another. But strips of alternate lead and copper connect the neighbouring tubes, by which means the terminals are of similar metal, and a current of sufficient intensity to violently affect a quantity galvanometer obtained. The potential increases, as in the ordinary galvanic arrangement, with the number of cells employed, until sixty cells showed an electro-motive force exceeding that of the same number of Daniell's elements. In this new battery the acid lead is positive to copper, while in the sulphide it is negative. Mr. Fleming further shows how, by using the single fluid nitric acid, and the single metal iron, a similar battery can be constructed, provided one half of each iron strip was rendered passive. This is an important discovery; for it seems to revive the theory that chemical action is not necessary in a galvanic apparatus to produce electricity.

CONDENSED MILK MANUFACTURE IN SWITZERLAND.

A FACTORY for the production of condensed milk has recently been established at Cham, canton Zug, on the borders of the lake of the same name, in Switzerland. The milk is furnished by peasants; and as soon as each person delivers his supply, a sample is taken from the pails, numbered, and allowed to remain quiet over night. The object of this is to judge the quality of the milk from the rising of the cream. Cases of fraud, however, are rare, as the peasantry are generally honest and the penalties imposed by the law are extremely severe.

The first operation is to weigh the milk, which to this end is conducted into a copper basin supported by a balance. Its weight being obtained, the milk is allowed to escape into huge wooden reservoirs lined

with zinc, and located in the cellar. Here a careful examination is made with the lactometer, and the fluid is drawn off into large cylindrical copper boilers which are placed in a vat furnished with a false bottom under which steam enters. The milk is thus slowly heated, but not boiled. For the latter purpose, it is ladled out into a separate boiler whence it is carried to another tank containing a quantity of white sugar. In order to facilitate the solution of the latter, the liquid is repeatedly passed along a metal trough from one vase to another.

When the operation is completed, it is drawn off into evaporating chambers. These receptacles resemble the similar apparatus used in sugar manufacture, and have double bottoms heated by steam. They are united to a column of condensation, which communicates with air pumps. Under these conditions the milk boils at 140 degrees Fah. Every little while the workman takes out a sample, from which he judges according to its viscosity whether the condensation is sufficient.

When the latter point is reached, the liquid is led down into the cellar and into a tin receptacle which is surrounded by cold water. The milk is thoroughly agitated by hand for some time until completely cool, when it is carried to other reservoirs and thence drawn off into boxes and sealed. The daily product is about 8,000 boxes, each weighing about 13.5 ounces. The milk may be diluted with five times its weight of water.

THE CAUSE OF THE ZODIACAL LIGHT.

PROFESSOR ARTHUR W. WRIGHT, in a paper on "The Polarization of the Zodiacal Light," in which the experiments of the investigator are detailed, and results given, will probably set at rest the moot question as to the nature of that celestial phenomenon. The zodiacal light is a faint, nebulous radiance, which, at certain seasons of the year, and especially within the tropics, is seen at the west after twilight is ended, or in the east before it has begun. The luminosity is conical in shape, the breadth of the base varying from 8 to 30 degrees in angular magnitude, and the apex being sometimes more than 90 degrees in rear of or in advance of the sun. To account for this appearance, several theories have been advanced. Cassini believed it a lenticular solar emanation; Kepler considered it the sun's atmosphere, and Maeranus, a reflection from the latter stretched out into a flattened spheroid. Laplace declared the phenomenon to be a nebulous, rotating ring, situated somewhere between the orbits of Venus and Mercury.

But few attempts, it appears, have ever been made to determine whether or not any portion of the light is polarized, and up to the present time, knowledge on the subject has been uncertain and contradictory, pointing either to the idea that the rays are not polarized at all, or that the proportion of polarized light is so small as to render it nearly impossible to be detected. Professor Wright, becoming convinced that the difficulty should be ascribed to the imperfections of the instruments employed, constructed a new apparatus, consisting of a quartz plate, cut perpendicular to the axis and exhibiting, by polarized light, an unusual intensity of colour. It is a macule, the body of the plate consisting of left-handed quartz, through which passes eccentrically a band of right-handed quartz, bounded by two intermediate strips of different structure. Placed between two Nicol's, these strips appeared as bands of colour, upon dark or light ground according to the turning of the prisms. This plate, mounted in a tube with a Nicol, formed a polariscope of extraordinary sensibility, and the first favourable opportunity to test its powers on the zodiacal light was improved. It was almost immediately found to indicate the existence of light polarized in a plane passing through the sun; and in no instance, when the sky was clear enough to render the bands visible, did their position, as determined by the observation, fail to agree with what would be required by polarization in the plane above noted. Not the slightest trace of bands was ever seen when the instrument was directed to other portions of the sky. The observations took place on clear, cold nights when the moon was absent. The polarization, it was also proven, did not arise from faint vestiges of twilight, the reflection of the zodiacal light itself in the atmosphere, or from imperfections in the latter.

Further experimenting was at once proceeded with to determine the percentage of light polarized, and it gave, as the mean of numerous determinations, the angle 86.6 degrees corresponding to a proportion of 16 per cent. 15 per cent., Professor Wright thinks, may be safely taken as the true value.

The fact of polarization implies that the light is reflected, either wholly or in part, and is thus derived originally from the sun. No bright lines were found in the spectrum, nor could any connection be traced between the zodiacal light and the polar

aurora. This is important, as excluding from the possible causes of the light the luminosity of gaseous matter, either spontaneous or due to electrical discharge. Further, it cannot be supposed that the light is reflected from masses of gas or from globules of precipitated vapour, as the latter, in empty space, must evaporate, and the former expand to too low a density to produce any effect on the rays of light. Hence, Professor Wright concludes that the light is reflected from matter in the solid state, from innumerable small bodies revolving about the sun in orbits, of which more lie in the neighbourhood of the ecliptic than near any other plane passing through the sun. These meteorites, which are in all probability similar in character to those which fall upon the earth, must be either metallic bodies or stony masses. If we accept Zöllner's conclusion, that the gases of the atmosphere must extend through the solar system, though in an extremely tenuous condition in space, the oxidation of metallic meteoroids would be merely a question of time. They would thus become capable of rendering polarized the light reflected from the plane, and the same effect would be produced by those of stony character. In order to ascertain whether the proportion of polarized light, actually observed, approached in any degree what might be expected from stony or earthy masses of a semi-crystalline character, with a granular structure and surfaces more or less rough, a large number of substances were submitted to examination with a polarimeter; and the results showed that, from surfaces of this nature, the light reflected has in general but a low depth of polarization, not greatly different in average from that of the zodiacal light.

The nature of the phenomenon, as discovered by Professor Wright, may therefore be summarized as follows:—It is polarized in a plane passing through the sun, to the amount of about 15 per cent. The spectrum is the same as that of sunlight, except in intensity. Its light is derived from the sun reflected on solid matter, which consists of small bodies revolving about the sun in orbits crowded together towards the ecliptic.

INCREASED CONSUMPTION OF PORK.—During the present year to the 30th ult. the importation of pork had greatly increased. The value of salted pork imported was 382,773*l.*, against 228,102*l.* in the previous year. Fresh pork had increased from 10,428*l.* in the same period of 1873 to 70,689*l.* this year.

A LIVE DODO.—The New York papers publish long extracts from the report of Colonel A. B. Steinberger, sent as a "special agent" of the United States Government to investigate the condition of the Samoa or Navigator's Islands. The expedition has secured a living dodo, and a specimen is on its way to that country.

A WORD TO MOTHERS.—Never let your children strike each other. The habit of giving blows grows upon a boy; and if personal violence be his only way of showing his anger, the time may come when an unlucky blow will make him a homicide, or even a murderer. Many a victim of the gallows can look back to the time when he might have been taught not to lift his hand against his brother, but was not, and trace the connection between his mother's neglect to inculcate in him one of the chief lessons of Christianity and his shameful death.

SALE OF EGGS BY WEIGHT.—The Legislature of Massachusetts has lately passed a law fixing a pound and a half as the minimum weight of a dozen eggs. This is a move in the right direction, and we hope other States will follow it up. An egg from a well-fed fowl is heavier and richer than an egg from a common fowl that is only half fed; and it is time that this old style of buying and selling eggs by number instead of weight should be discontinued. It discourages the breeder of blooded and fine fowls to find that their large eggs fetch no more than the small and poor produce of inferior poultry.

INFANT LABOUR.—The working men of Holland have taken up the question of young persons in a very energetic manner. More than 100 workmen's unions, including upwards of 12,000 members, were represented at a general meeting which took place some time back at the Hague, when resolutions were carried to the effect that no young person who had not completed his or her twelfth year should be employed in any factory or workshop; that between twelve and fifteen years of age the maximum working hours should not exceed six; that no young person should be ever allowed to work between the hours of 8 p.m. and 6 a.m.; and that three hours should be devoted to primary instruction. The meeting voted an appeal to the Government to regulate by parliamentary action the system of co-operation in favour of the working classes.

FISH SCALE ORNAMENTS.—The scales of several varieties of fish, hitherto thrown away as useless, are prepared for application in the arts by producing articles of jewellery, artificial flowers, and similar objects. This invention consists in the pro-

cess of cleansing and purifying the scales till the clear, horny substance or core of the same is obtained, which produces a new article of manufacture, which may be stamped into various ornamental shapes and dyed in all colours, for use in the arts. Large scales are the most advantageous, taken from fresh fish. Old scales cannot be used, as they lack elasticity and clearness. The fresh scales are exposed for twenty-four hours to the action of pure salt water, for loosening and partially separating the outer layers of organic matter. They are then transferred to distilled water, being placed every two or three hours in clean water and washed therein five or six times, which renders the scales soft and clear. Each scale is then carefully rubbed with clean linen rags, then passed through a press having a linen lining so as to remove the moisture in the scales. The scales are finally placed for one hour in alcohol, and again rubbed and pressed, when they are dry and have a perfectly clear appearance, a mother-of-pearl-like hue, and great elasticity and durability.

WONDERS OF INSTINCT.—In the instinct of animals we are perpetually finding new wonders. What it has taken man thousands of years to discover, the animal knows by a law of its creation. Insect life is rich in these wonderful things. Here is a single instance, which explains why bees work in the dark:—Every one knows what honey, fresh from the comb, is like. It is a pure syrup, without a trace of solid sugar in it. Upon straining, however, it gradually assumes a crystalline appearance—it candies, as the saying is, and ultimately becomes a solid lump of sugar. It has not been suspected that this change was due to a photographic action; that the same agent which alters the molecular arrangement of the iodine of silver on the excited collodion plate, and determines the formation of camphor and iodine crystals in a bottle, causes the syrup honey to assume a crystalline form. This, however, is the case. M. Scheibler has enclosed honey in stoppered flasks, some of which he has kept in perfect darkness, whilst others have been exposed to the light. The invariable results have been that the sunned portion rapidly crystallizes, while that kept in the dark has remained perfectly liquid. We now see why bees are so careful to obscure the glass windows which are sometimes placed in their hives. The existence of their young depends on the liquidity of saccharine food presented to them, and if light were allowed access to this the syrup would acquire a more or less solid consistency; it would seal up cells, and in all probability prove fatal to the inmates of the hives.

THE BLENKARNE INHERITANCE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

Miss Arlingcourt's Will, "The Ebony Casket," "The Secret of Schwarzenburg," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XXXI.

COLONEL BLENKARNE had somehow no heart to remain at the Manor House amid the hasty wedding preparations, although his sister was in such brilliant spirits and the handsome East Indian so suave and entertaining. He tried to argue himself out of his secret distaste for their society, and to believe that Ethel's heavy eyes only betokened the natural gravity of a shy nature venturing upon such an important change. But in spite of the effort his mind was filled with vague disquietude. To do Ethel justice, it must be owned the dear girl did her best to appear cheerful and to accept, uncomplainingly the hard alternative forced upon her. But she was pale and languid, and shied away from every one's observation upon every opportunity presented.

Madame Roscoe's delight and ambition blinded her eyes, and Aubrey, like his uncle, attributed it half to the abruptness of the proceedings upon a sensitive nature, and trusted blindly that it would be all right presently. It must be considered also that Amri was exceedingly circumspect before them both, and never betrayed anything but the utmost amiability of character.

It was Frank Osborne's terse, pertinent question that had first startled Colonel Blenkarn.

"My dear sir, you know my sincere friendship for you all," he said; "let it excuse me for asking you if you have good proof that these India people are what they represent themselves?"

It was easier to answer him and send the young man away still despondent than to quiet his own aroused fears. He was sitting alone in his town room just as Frank had left him, when there came another summons to the door.

Jones could not be spared from the busy Manor House, where he and Margery were absorbed in such culinary preparations as would have been deemed fearfully extravagant two months before, so Colonel Blenkarn went to the door himself, not without secret annoyance, for he was in no mood

for visitors. He was, however, at once interested, if perturbed, by the handsome young couple who stood there waiting for his invitation to cross the threshold. At first he glanced only at the beautiful young girl whose fresh loveliness had so strikingly reminded him of other times, for he at once recognized her as the object of Ethel's admiration.

"It is Colonel Blenkarn, I believe," said Algeron, with his gentlemanly grace of delivery. "I come to beg a few moments' private audience with you, Miss Wymer, sir."

"Come in—come in at once, and pray be seated," answered the colonel, politely bowing to them both. And he brought forward the easy-chair for the young lady, who accepted it with a deprecating smile.

Her companion did not take a seat, but stood with one hand on the arm of the chair, hat in hand.

"I thank you for your courtesy, sir, and will try not to detain you," he said. "My name is Algeron Vansittant. I was sent over from Calcutta by General Ralph Vansittant with a letter of introduction to you."

"Algeron Vansittant!" repeated Colonel Blenkarn, and turned now and looked the speaker over with sharp, half-terrified glances.

The longer he gazed the more startled he grew. Was not that the true Blenkarn's manliness of form and open frankness of expression? Besides, there was another thing—a little trick of lifting the eyebrow—how many years had passed since he had seen it last!

"Poor Aubrey! poor Aubrey!" he muttered, and still stared blankly.

"I cannot wonder at your surprise," went on Algeron, calmly. "I know that another person has already presented himself bearing my name and credentials; but if you will be good enough to hear my story—"

"I see your face," ejaculated the colonel, suddenly stretching out his hand, "and it is Aubrey Blenkarn's living image! Tell me why Aubrey's instead of Ralph's. I cannot understand it all."

"Let me tell my story," said Algeron, again, and this time accepted the proffered chair; and, beginning at the leave-taking in Calcutta, related the whole story.

Colonel Blenkarn never interrupted by a single question. He scarcely made a gesture, but kept his eyes upon the manly face changing with the different experience of his narrative, and in every new expression growing more and more familiar.

"You will see that at present I have only my own word and the testimony of my friends, Wymer and Blennerhasset," concluded Algeron. "That artful impostor has my papers and the precious belt; but I only ask for the needed time to prove all my statements by more than a score of influential people in Calcutta. Let Sir Richard Atcherly describe to you the lineaments of the true Algeron, or wait until the captain of the East India steamer which was wrecked can be found. We are so utterly unlike that it will be difficult to make any mistake. I meant to collect my proofs myself, but I feared there might be some harm done. I remember that General Vansittant wished a speedy marriage."

"And did you also expect to contract such?" asked the colonel, suddenly.

Algeron glanced meaningfully towards Daisy, whose face was averted, and answered, promptly:

"No, sir. There is one condition that cannot be fulfilled in my case. Thank Heaven! General Vansittant did not insist upon it. I told you that he said he would not bind me to it. I do not see why, if there is a claim, and it proves valuable, there cannot be a just division."

"Just Ethel's words!" exclaimed Colonel Blenkarn. "Poor little Ethel! How culpable we have been!"

And he fell into a deep reverie.

"I hope you do not quite discredit my story, sir," said Algeron, presently.

The other smiled mournfully.

"I have yielded such blind credence before," he answered, "that I am trying not to be impulsive now, but to use my judgment coolly. I cannot deny that you have my full sympathy, as he has never had. Your face, so like that of my boyhood's playmate—"

"Ah! but I told you he said I was not his son."

"True. Yet I am sure I have grasped at the solution. The letter solemnly assures me he sends the only Blenkarn heir to share with us in the bequest. The rumour of poor Aubrey's marriage must have been true. Ralph found his child and adopted it. Nothing could be more natural. And yet you must have been like a conscience thrust all the while to poor Ralph."

"You speak as if you already adopted me," said Algeron, with a little quiver in his voice. "I half expected you to drive me away in scorn."

"What, with that face?" answered he. "No, I am not going to endorse either of you until I have the proofs. My niece was to be married to-morrow, to that impostor, I was going to say. You see it is

hard to reserve my judgment. They must produce better proof now than their words, and the belt you tell about must be put in safe hands. The mother's haste looks suspicious now. Yet we credited her story. Do you know of General Vansittant's fate? Why, I have not thought of it before. The woman claims to be the general's wife, the mother of his son."

"His wife?" repeated Algeron, in amazement: "he had no wife. All Calcutta knows that." And then he added, joyfully: "Then they have overreached themselves. It will be an evidence against them. Who can the woman be?"

"A handsome creature, tall and slender, with great, glittering eyes, and heavy black hair, and a dancing-master's grace of movement. She makes me think of some barbaric princess."

"Aimée—the description will answer for no one else!" cried out Algeron. "Ah, now it is all explained. The artful creature has had the cards in her own hands, I see. She wrote me that letter. She has instructed him. Strange that I did not remember him before. I read the whole story. The impostor is that half-cast son of hers. Now, then, my way is clear."

"But that belt is in their hands," said the colonel, anxiously.

"I would I knew just what its contents are," returned Algeron, eagerly.

"I think I can tell you. I am as confident as one could well be under the circumstances. It holds, if I am not grievously mistaken, the famous, priceless, long-lost Blenkarn emeralds."

"The Blenkarn emeralds?" repeated Algeron.

"Have you never heard of them?" asked Colonel Blenkarn.

"Never."

"Let me tell you the story another time. Enough that an ancestor of ours five generations back, on the eve of battle, hid the enormous fortune he had converted into those matchless jewels, and being killed in the fight, his secret perished with him, and in vain have all the Blenkarns since searched and searched until at last in our boyhood it came to be almost a myth. But we three lads, Ralph and Aubrey and I, were always pledging ourselves to find them. It was Ralph's ring, the ring I gave him so many years ago, that made me so ready to accept this reputed son."

"And they have the treasure in their possession? I wonder they have not fled with it rather than come to share it," thoughtfully declared Algeron.

"I do not believe the young man knows what it contains. But the woman was the one who was to produce them. She has hinted plainly that the fortune is in jewels, and where it can be produced when the marriage is accomplished. She must show it first now."

"The marriage. Yes, yes; then he would be secure even if I proved my claim. Now I see the explanation. Cunning Aimée! it was she who planned it all. The general used to say she should have been a man, she had such powers of strategy."

"Can you explain the murder? Perhaps the belt was the indirect cause of that."

"It was never Adam. No one will make me believe that," cried Algeron, indignantly.

"Well," said Colonel Blenkarn, "what is to be done? Shall I confront them with your story?"

"Nay, let me be there myself. And precautions must be taken to secure the belt, if it is in their possession."

"Algeron," spoke Daisy for the first time, drawing something forth from under her shawl.

"I beg your pardon, Daisy. We have quite ignored your presence," he answered, turning to her with a smile.

"I told you I wanted to come with you. It was because Lady Blenkarn sent me with something for Colonel Guy Blenkarn."

"Lady Blenkarn?" ejaculated the colonel, frowning a little.

"I will tell you the story in a moment, and her message," went on Daisy; "but first, Algeron, look here. Have you ever seen this?"

Algeron stared in incredulous amazement a moment, and then fairly shouted as he rushed forward:

"The belt! My belt! It is impossible I can mistake it. Oh, sir, we are saved! it is found."

He made a joyful gesture towards it, but Daisy's little hands closed upon it firmly.

"Wait a moment," she said, and turned to Colonel Blenkarn. "Oh, sir, you have heard his story. You see that he recognizes it at this distance. I was sure myself that it was his belt, but I had promised to give it only to your hands. You will give it to him, and let everything be as if he had brought it himself?"

"I don't understand you," faltered the colonel, while Algeron looked at her in amazement.

"Lady Blenkarn gave it to me. The strange, evil-faced old woman was following her to get it, and she gave it to me to bring to you. I know it

was through much trouble and danger she was trying to preserve it for the right owners. Let me tell you her words."

And in her firm, sweet tones, Daisy repeated every word that Lady Blenkarn had said to her.

"This passes my comprehension!" stammered the colonel.

"Where could she have obtained it?" demanded Algeron.

"Why not go and ask her?" cried Daisy, earnestly. "Oh, I could wish you would. I don't know why, but I am troubled to think of her. Don't you remember that the fierce old woman made her go into her coach, and I saw her eyes flash so vindictively after her?"

"An old woman?" repeated the colonel, still bewildered, and uncertain what to think.

"A frightful old mummy. It may be as Daisy fears, that she meant her mischief," exclaimed Algeron, and described their unpleasant visitor.

"Madame Blanc undoubtedly," muttered Guy Blenkarn, and fell into deep thought.

"And about the belt. Daisy, dear, won't you let me be sure if it is the one I received from the general?" asked Algeron.

She waved a deprecating hand.

"I promised to give it into his hand, you know. Will you take it, sir? Oh, give it back to him, I pray you."

Colonel Blenkarn took into his hand the wide leather that had held so magnificent a secret for all these years, not without a thrill.

"If it is mine there should be a little illegible line in indelible ink at the centre. I always intended to try it with a magnifying glass and see if it had any meaning," said Algeron.

"It is here," returned the colonel, and rising took out a magnifier from his desk.

The next instant he uttered a little shout of transport:

"No myth! no myth!" he cried; "the emeralds are found!"

"But what can it mean?" asked the perplexed Algeron. "Are they cheated themselves? What can it mean? How could Lady Blenkarn have become possessed of this belt?"

"And send it back to me!" muttered the colonel.

"Go and ask her," reiterated Daisy.

"I will," answered Colonel Blenkarn, solemnly.

"But she warned you to beware of an enemy," pursued Daisy. "I am sure it was the fierce old woman she meant. Where will you put the belt that it may be safe for Algeron?"

"For us all," said Colonel Blenkarn. "We will not examine it now. We will carry it at once to the bank vault for safe keeping, and to-morrow, when we have settled with them, we will look upon the long-lost glory of the Blenkarns."

"Her ladyship will have her share, will she not?" questioned Daisy, quickly. "Ah, she was so sweetly gracious and so earnest! How softly her voice thrilled when she spoke your name, Colonel Guy Blenkarn. I said to myself then, 'It is a name she loves.' My lady will share the joy, won't she?"

"Good Heavens! I think I am dreaming!" muttered Guy Blenkarn; "but this is tangible, clutching at the belt."

The next instant staring away from them he murmured:

"Madame Blanc the enemy? Madame Blanc who grieved so while she revealed to me the treachery of Ernestine? Good Heavens! good Heavens! have we both been victims of her wicked plots?"

"I am sure that Lady Blenkarn is true and good," cried the enthusiastic Daisy. "She could never have looked so if she had not been. Go to her, and she will explain all."

"I will go," repeated Guy Blenkarn again, in that far-away, solemn tone.

"And what shall be the programme for to-morrow, sir?"

"Let matters proceed as if we had discovered nothing. The wedding was to be strictly private. Let the arrangements go on without giving them any hint of these new disclosures. I will go with you to deposit this belt in safety, and then I shall lose no time in seeing Lady Blenkarn. Tell me where to find you to-night, and I will give you further particulars."

Algeron described the location of their cottage.

"So near! Then I will call on my way to the Manor House. I must find some excuse for a brief visit there. I shall only long to relieve poor little Ethel. But we will unravel the whole truth to-morrow—the whole truth!" he added, his fine eyes lighting up with a new hope.

"And we may return now," said Daisy, rising; and, putting her hand on Algeron's arm, she added, with an arch smile: "Ah, Algeron, the fairies have helped the princess again. Who would have believed that the belt would come back to you so strangely?"

"Please to finish the spell," he returned, gaily, with an eloquent glance that brought a deeper

colour to her cheek. "Give me the best treasure of all."

They both accompanied Colonel Blenkarne to the bank, and saw the box which held the belt deposited safe.

Then the youthful pair took their way home, little dreaming of the solemn scene awaiting them there, nor in the least foreseeing how speedily even this exciting interview would be banished from their minds.

CHAPTER XXXII.

MADAME BLANC's threatening face was again the only sight which greeted Lady Blenkarne's eyes as for the second time her consciousness returned.

She shut them quickly, and moaned. "I will take off the torture if you but answer my question," cried madame, sharply. "I tell you there is no escape for you."

"Leave me then to die unmocked," faltered the sufferer.

"Leave you rather to suffer keener torture," retorted the other, with a fiendish malignity. "I will leave you half an hour and then return to screw it to the last turn. Meantime Amariah is searching the Terrace from roof to basement. And I am going to send off Blaise to do the same for that cottage."

The groan was stifled ere it escaped the pale lips, and her ladyship prayed secretly:

"Heaven grant that she has carried it before this. Oh, Heaven grant that this expiation of mine be accepted, and prove of service to them. If only the belt is safe, I will bear it all and not murmur."

Madame Blanc looked the door behind her, and left her victim powerless to help herself, even to the water which stood on the table near by and looked so grateful to her parched lips. The half-hour was long past before the tormentor returned. The pain was well nigh intolerable, and yet at a sharp glance at her face the woman seized upon her hands, and turned the screw again.

Another heart-torn shriek burst from the tortured sufferer.

"Have you no mercy in your nature? Aunt, aunt, how can you serve your own flesh and blood in this merciless way?" cried Lady Blenkarne.

"Tell me where to find that belt! You are none of mine. You are leaguering yourself with those I have sworn to destroy. Do you think, after all my years of steady working, I shall stop short now? I want that belt. I will have it. You dare not deny that you know what has become of it. Tell me where to find it."

"I will never tell!" answered Lady Blenkarne, firmly, "not if you murder me, as you seem willing to do. And I your own niece."

"Bah! you need not think to move me by that plea. I have cheated you from the beginning. I took you, and called you my niece, because I saw you had a fair face and winning manners, and I meant you to work just the mischief that came about in the hated family. Ah, I planned and plotted, and deceived you all! And my ends came about, all of them! And they shall not fail now! Do you think I have not known how in your weak way you have tried to circumvent me, to save, and spare them? and all for love of Guy Blenkarne. You love him now. Let it comfort you to know that he was true to you, but it was my forged letter that roused your pride, and my cunning representations that turned his mind against you. It is too late now to help it. You cannot win him any more than the dead Aubrey, or his renegade brother, for his heart is full of bitterness and anger. So you do not mean to tell me? Very well, my Lady Blenkarne. Do you know what will become of you? I shall make you inhale a maddening vapour that will craze your brain, and I shall call in a physician of my own choosing, whose certificate will prove you mad. I can buy a dozen such doctors any day, and then, as your loving, tender aunt, you know, I shall claim the privilege of keeping you here to be sure that you are kindly treated. Ha, ha! it will be a delectable life for you. You could not bear more than a year of it—be sure of that. So if your mind is made up, say your prayers quickly."

These words were hissed forth through the thin, livid lips that were fairly foaming with the maniac rage into which she had worked herself.

Lady Blenkarne only looked a moment at the fiery eyes, and closed hers despairingly.

"Is there no help? Oh help, help!" she shrieked aloud, in the last efforts of her extremity.

There was a hurried dash at the window, a sudden shivering of glass and sash, a quick leap, a furious bound, and the next instant, cut and bleeding, but fierce and strong as a roused man can be, Guy Blenkarne leaped into the room.

"Blaise—Amariah!" shouted Madame Blanc.

But she had sent them both on her merciless errands, and no response came.

Colonel Blenkarne caught up the fainting figure and held it closely to his breast with one arm, while

he shook the other hand fiercely in madame's convulsed face.

"Fiend!" he vociferated; "I have heard your taunts: I understand now all your black treachery. Thank Heaven I have come in season. Ernestine, look up!"

And then he discovered the manacled hands—the cruel instrument of torture. With a wrathful curse he unfastened the lock and tore off the terrible thing.

"Ernestine! Ernestine!" he called again, imploringly. But her head dropped heavily against his arm, and her eyes were closed. The sudden relief had been too much.

Madame Blanc stood a moment like one paralyzed, but with a yell of animal rage she leaped towards him.

Strong as a giant in his terrible excitement, Guy Blenkarne thrust her back; and carrying his burden with one arm, he threw up the window and sprang out.

He heard a wild, snarling tumult behind, there in the room he had left, and a heavy fall, but he gave no heed, only mindful of the pale face and closed eyes lying against his shoulder.

He carried her out of sight of the edious house to a little purring brook, and there sprinkled her face and bathed the poor discoloured swollen thumbs. And as he worked the yearning tenderness grew warmer and warmer in his shining eyes.

Her reviving glance read it all.

"I am safe!" she murmured.

"I shall not feel sure of it till we are farther away from that accursed spot. Her menials may return at any moment. If you can lean on me and walk to the nearest house where we can procure any sort of a carriage?" he returned.

For answer she staggered to her feet.

He gave her the support of his strong arm, and shortly her steps grew steadier and stronger.

"Kind Heaven sent you to save me," murmured Lady Blenkarne, softly.

"It was your doing. You sent me the belt, at what a cost! Good Heavens, at what a cost! I hurried to ask an explanation of you. They told me at the Terrace that you were here. I came over, uncertain whether to seek admittance or to wait until you appeared in sight. But I heard your shriek. I rushed to the window and heard her taunts—her confession of the cruel deceptions she used.

Ernestine, Ernestine, I dare not talk to you now. I must be calmer and you must be safe from danger. Thank Heaven! there is a farmer's cart coming."

And he flew forward and hailed the honest driver, who stared in amazement when the pale lady was led to a seat in his rude vehicle, for he was a townsman, and recognized them both.

"I am almost afraid to leave you here," said Guy Blenkarne, wistfully, as he led the mistress of Blenkarne Terrace through its great halls amid the wondering stares of her servants.

"Mr. Osborne will protect me," she answered, softly. "And I will have my physician here to attend to these poor crushed thumbs of mine, and keep him until—you return."

"Do you ask me to return?" he asked, eagerly. Her eyelids drooped shyly, and she hesitated.

"If you heard all she said you know we were all deceived," she answered at length. "Let me have a full and candid explanation."

"With all my heart," he answered, promptly. "And that woman—am I not to send an officer of some kind to take care of her?"

"Let it be keepers for the insane. She is truly a maniac. I wonder I have not mistrusted it before. And here is Mr. Osborne. Now you may be sure I shall be cared for."

"You here, Colonel Blenkarne," ejaculated Frank, as he bobbed and solemnly he crossed the hall.

"Ay, my lad. And there are brighter days coming for us all. Cheer up. I read your secret this morning, and would not help you. Now I give you hope," returned the colonel, joyfully.

Frank flushed a little, and then asked, huskily: "Do you mean that you will prevent the sacrifice of that angel?"

"Cheer up, I say. This has been a wonderful day, but I think to-morrow's revelation will go still beyond. Watch over Lady Blenkarne, Osborne. Do not lose sight of her a moment, or allow any one but the physician admittance."

And quite forgetting the notoriety of the family feud, and the curious wonderment of the gaping servants, like one who had been accustomed to walk freely in those stately corridors, Colonel Blenkarne went over the house, cautioning them all to be wary and careful of their mistress's safety, vaguely hinting of the great peril from which he had rescued her. Amariah, slinking from the lodge gateway, escaped his scrutiny, and hurried off to Cedar Knoll, half-ashamed, half-indignant, to demand an explanation there of this strange sight he had seen, my lady coming to her home leaning upon Colonel Guy's arm, with a peaceful smile upon her pallid

face. But he found only a raving maniac, savage and suicidal, surrounded by a cordon of doctors and attendants.

From the Terrace Colonel Blenkarne turned off towards the street, wondering secretly in his own heart at the renewal of strength and elasticity of spirit that seemed that seemed to have come over him.

The sorrowful scene he found there at the Wymer cottage did something towards recalling him from the trance-like exaltation of feeling which had taken possession of him.

The undertaker was coming out of the yard just as he was entering it.

And Algeron standing in the doorway speaking the last words to him, saw and recognized the new visitor, and came down promptly to meet him, and to tell him the sad story of their sudden bereavement.

"I grieve for your sweet young friend," said the colonel; "and if there in any way that I can be of service to her, I need not assure you that it will be cheerfully done. I am sure my little Ethel will find something comforting to say to her. Tell her how gratefully Lady Blenkarne speaks of her, and ask her to accompany you to-morrow, if possible, for we shall need every link of our chain of evidence ready at hand to prove our position, and I think her ladyship is hoping to meet her there, if she herself is well enough to come. I will see you again in the morning, and make you acquainted with the details of my plan."

"And you still have faith in my pretensions?" asked Algeron.

"If you are not a Blenkarne your face betrays you strangely," returned he, with an affectionate smile. "And indeed my heart is so full of new hopes and half-trembling trusts, I have no room for suspicions or doubts."

He left the cordial pressure upon Algeron's hand, and with a message of respectful sympathy for Daisy took leave without entering the house.

It was a more difficult task to make his daily visit at the Manor House, and to conceal from them the new emotions that were filling his heart and occupying his thoughts.

Fortunately for him they were all too busy and absorbed to scrutinize his face very closely.

His sister only looked up from her work for a moment to say:

"How well you are looking to-day, Guy! Does it seem to you that this is really true—that we are so near to fortune and ease again?"

"I cannot say that I do feel fully assured of it. Do you know it occurred to me to-day that we were not really and positively in possession of any proofs?" My dear madam," he added, politely turning to Aimée, whose great eyes had followed every movement of his, "I should like a plain statement of the case. For Ethel's sake it should have been required before any engagement was agreed upon. I am ashamed that I have been so remiss in my duty as her guardian. Now, however, that the preparations for the wedding ceremony are all completed, I must insist upon a full explanation."

"The general bade me be sure that they were really married," began Aimée.

"Well! And I am equally positive there must be full proof that you are able to fulfil the conditions you promise before I consent for the marriage to actually take place," he returned.

She read the firm determination in his eye and voice.

"But certainly!"—she spoke promptly—"it is the same thing as being married now—almost the same thing. I do not refuse to tell you that the general came into possession of the long-lost Blenkarne emeralds. He had them carefully stitched in a belt, which he wore constantly about his person for nearly twenty years, in all that time never making up his mind what should be done with them. You probably know yourself the value of the gems. My son has had them in his possession. They are now in mine. After the marriage to-morrow they will belong to the two families, and I will produce them."

"Have you seen the jewels?" asked Colonel Blenkarne, apparently in a voice of eager curiosity concerning the gems, and not of the fact of their being in her possession.

"No; I have not opened the carefully-secured layers of leather. I will do so, if you wish, to-morrow after the clergyman is here."

"I think I should prefer to have you exhibit them before the ceremony. It is only right for me to be cautious in the matter."

"Ah, if there should be a mistake!" ejaculated Madame Roscoe. "I thought you had seen them. Oh, I think it would break my heart to have them vanish into delusive myths again."

"There is no mistake," pronounced Aimée, decisively. "General Vansittart was not a man to be deceived. I have his written and verbal authority that the belt contains the magnificent fortune we all desire. That they were so valuable, so dangerous an encumbrance when once made known to any spy-



[THE DAY BEFORE THE WEDDING.]

ing eye, was good reason for me to refrain from disturbing them in their secure hiding-place. To-morrow they shall see the light, probably for the first time for twenty years, if not twice that time."

"What if she is right?" questioned the colonel, inwardly—"what if it is really her belt which holds the precious treasure?"

"Is this promise satisfactory?" asked Aimée, looking a trifle anxiously into the gentleman's face. "It should be, certainly. We will let the matter rest till then," answered the colonel. "Where is Ethel?"

"Out in the garden probably. I believe she is pretending to gather flowers for decking the rooms. It is natural she should be perturbed and restless at such a time. Oh, Guy, will it not be beautiful to see her adorned as becomes her race, and moving in that world she knows so little about, caressed and admired?"

"It will be beautiful to see her gladhearted and happy," answered he. "I must have a word with her before I go. Did I understand your son to say he wished to make a bridal trip to Paris, and that you would accompany them?" he asked, turning again to Aimée.

She gave the answer without looking full in his face.

"Yes. I recommended the trip. The young people can obtain all the elegant wardrobes there that will be needed on the return to London. The jewels also, such as are to be disposed of, will find the best market there. I hope Madame Roscoe will also accompany us."

"You don't object, I hope?" spoke his sister, quickly. "I am delighted with the idea. Don't you see, too, it will give us a chance to have the transition from this odious obscurity to our proper sphere made abroad? We can take care to have our return to England heralded."

"Well; there will be time enough to decide the matter to-morrow. I had not heard the project before to-day."

"To-morrow!" echoed Madame Roscoe, clasping her hands. "Oh, Guy, can you realize that to-morrow we shall be happy and rich and prosperous again—that we shall look with our veritable eyes upon the Blenkarné emeralds?"

Her face was all a-shine with the brightness of her hope.

He looked down to her with a smile almost as radiant, although something in his expression puzzled her.

"Yes, my dear sister," he returned, "I think I can realize that we are to be happy again."

And he hurried out before there could be anything farther said.

Aimée drew a soft, low breath.

"He shares her hopes," she thought. "My momentary suspicion of something wrong had no foundation."

Ethel was up in "The Wild Garden," as it was called at the Manor House.

Strangely enough, too, it chanced she was standing at the head of the great embankment, and looking down towards Blenkarné Terrace.

Her basket of flowers had been left below, and she was standing with one hand pressed against her side as if to still some dull pain there, and the other grasping a withered spray of primroses, which she had evidently drawn out from some secret hiding-place.

Colonel Blenkarné could not know that it was the first branch Frank Osborne had even broken for her; but he saw the dreary shadows in those gentle eyes, and the wistful curve of the sweet young lips, and guessed near enough the truth.

He stood a moment in silence watching her, and then spoke her name softly:

"Ethel, dear!"

She turned with a nervous start, and seeing who it was, put off the grave look and tried her best to smile.

"Dear child, this is a new place for you," he said, putting one arm around her tenderly: "you were the one sturdy little plebeian who stoutly declared against aristocratic antecedents—the only one in all the family. You used to amuse me wishing so heartily that you could never hear the name of Blenkarné Terrace, and now I find you looking over towards it—why, Ethel, dear, almost longingly."

She coloured faintly, but managed to produce an arch smile.

"I am drifting into the unknown world of fashion and elegance and aristocracy. So mamma assures me! Is it strange, then, that I came for my first peep nearest home?"

"Ethel, do you feel assured of happiness?"

"Are you ever sure of that?" she returned, gravely. "I am trying to do my duty and to rest content in that. I was wondering just now if any one under the most auspicious circumstances can rest calm and secure at such a time? Perhaps the very excess of trust and love and hope make a restless fear arise in the breast of the happiest bride in all the world who stands to-night as I do. I suppose there are bridal as well as deaths occurring simultaneously all over the world; don't you?"

"Undoubtedly. And were you pitying or envying them, those others?"

"Scarcely either, only wondering about them, I think."

"And I was wondering about you, Ethel. That innocent heart is a transparent mirror sometimes, and sometimes it is as mysterious and strange as the topmost peak of the loneliest range of the great mountains that hide their heads in the clouds and veil themselves in mist. Ethel, dear, have you thought me wickedly careless of your happiness?"

She gave him a quick, startled look, then slipped her hand into his lovingly.

"No, Uncle Guy; I knew you acquiesced, as I do, in the necessity of the thing."

"But somebody else thinks so, and almost persuaded me into believing it against myself. Young Osborne called on me this morning. His heart was most easily read."

The fair young head dropped low, a scarlet tide stained even the delicate throat and fair white brow, but all she said was:

"I am sorry."

He bent down and looked only a single instant into the shy and troubled eyes.

"Dear Ethel," he whispered, gathering her into his arms, "don't grieve at all to-night, but rest calm and hopeful. The morning may bring to you and to me the fruition of hopes more beautiful and precious than the richest mine of emeralds the geni have ever hinted of. Keep quiet and calm, my darling, and trust those who love you best."

She half-retreated from his arms, staring up wildly into his face.

"Uncle Guy, you mean?" And then faltering in her voice, added, wistfully: "But mamma and Aubrey?"

"Could anything be beautiful for us that did not also insure their content?" he said, chidingly. "Little one, be calm and trustful, and do not be surprised if we have more guests to-morrow than our East Indian friends anticipate. Keep my little hint to yourself, dear. I could not bear to think of your enduring another sorrowful night, that is all."

And with another kiss he had gone.

Ethel sat down upon the wall, and yet again, in her new hope as in her renunciation and patient endurance, her eyes went over wistfully towards Blenkarné Terrace.

It was not my lady she was thinking of, nor the mysterious Sir Marmaduke either.

Foolish Ethel! still so lowly and plebeian in her tastes. How much more to her than imperious mistress or fortunate heir was the manly young tutor?

Colonel Guy meantime went hurrying to his town house, to be himself surprised by another unexpected visitor waiting there for his appearance.

(To be continued.)



[CHECKMATED.]

LOVE'S DREAM AND REALITY;

OR,
THE HOUSE OF SECRETS.

CHAPTER XVI.

This bud of love, by summer's ripening breath,
May prove a beauteous flower when next we meet.

Shakespeare.

On the following day Myra Halstead was out shopping attended only by Sylvia.

She was always difficult to please in articles she thought of purchasing; and while she was trifling at the counter her attendant amused herself by lounging at the door, watching the passers-by.

On a sudden she ran in, caught her young mistress by the sleeve, and whispered earnestly. Myra turned hastily round.

A young man was standing at a little distance, earnestly gazing on her. He came directly up as he caught her eye.

"Miss Halstead!" he said, in a tone so low as to be inaudible to any other person; "I'm so fortunate at last as to meet you—"

"Mr. Hobart," answered the young girl, drawing herself up, "I beg you will not detain me, I was going home."

"Not till you give me an opportunity for explanation, for asking your forgiveness!" he cried, following her as she moved to the door.

"And where do you think such an explanation is to take place? Not in the shop, or the street?"

"My club is in the next street, let me attend you there, I beg of you! Oh, Myra! it is not like you to be so cruel! You were always candid and just to all!"

To address the girl thus was to flatter her in the weakest point.

She prided herself on her justice. And the passionate pleading of her lover went to her heart. But she had grown too wise to be led blindfold.

"You must think very strangely of me," she said, haughtily, "to imagine me ready to comply with your imprudent request. Go to your club, where a dozen people might see me and make their comments! Have you no more respect for me than to believe I would sacrifice my own dignity to please you?"

"Oh, Myra! you have made me so unhappy. I was desperate!" moaned the young man; and his distress visibly affected her.

"Where will you give me an interview?" he said.

"At my own house, if anywhere," replied the girl.

"But your father—you know how he hates me and—"

"Leave him to me, sir. If it will relieve your fears, I may tell you that he and Mrs. Halstead are both from home."

"And may I accompany you, dear, dear Myra?"

"I have said once you might come. Sylvia, take up those parcels, and come with me."

Fred offered his arm, but the young lady declined it; she had not yet quite forgiven him. They had walked but a short distance when a young gentleman met them, whom Myra recognized as Lawrence Wyatt.

He was perfectly enchanted to see her, and full of compliments on her improved appearance, and of questions as to the health of those at home.

"You may see for yourself, Mr. Wyatt," said the girl. "I am just going home; come along and you will find Mrs. Singleton and Raymond, I daresay."

She cast a glance at her lover, and smiled to see how disturbed he was at the idea of having the company of the stranger, whom she had not even introduced.

Worse than all, at a difficult crossing she took Wyatt's arm.

Young Hobart did not fathom her finesse.

Just before they arrived at the house, the girl whispered to Sylvia, and the maid ran round to the rear of the building.

As the three ascended the steps, she had opened the hall door.

"Tell Mrs. Singleton," she said to the maid, "Mr. Wyatt would like to see her; and—stay, show him upstairs into the drawing-room. Come this way, Mr. Hobart."

She led the way to a small room at the back of the the library, a place sacred to her own occupation—her music, books and work—whenever, as was seldom the case, she found leisure for any of those things.

"You may take a seat, Mr. Hobart," she said, more graciously, throwing herself on a chintz-covered couch, and tossing off her hat and mantle. "How warm it is, to be sure!"

The young man availed himself of the permission and of the opportunity of pleading his own cause. He saw that Myra was greatly changed since her entrance into society, and more difficult to win. With the more earnestness he strove to regain what he had lost; and he managed matters so cleverly that the girl's heart was softened towards him.

"I might believe all this, Fred," she said, "if I had not so lately, so very lately, seen your devotion to another."

"Myra, cannot you make allowance for the sufferings of a man driven to despair by your coldness and your receiving the homage of so many admirers? I saw you always surrounded; I could not approach you; you seemed to smile on the least of my rivals, while you scorned me. And you fancied that I cared for that Mrs. Wetmore, with her wealth and simpering ways! Oh, Myra, do not think me devoid of all sense—of all taste!"

"She is very handsome, and some say she is witty, and, as you say, she is rich."

"Do not name her; she cannot hold a candle to your beauty, Myra."

"Oh, Fred, you flatter me!"

"It is truth, and who would care for her riches. Yours are the riches truly worth seeking. You are in every way her superior."

The inexperienced young girl drank in his flatteries as if they were truths. She had heard much of the social success of Aurelia Wetmore, and it pleased her to be exalted in praises above her.

Her blue eyes laughed; her rosy mouth pouted in merely mock shyness; the lovely crimson mantled her cheek. When the young man, pressing his advantage, again took possession of her hand and slipped on one of the white fingers a pretty ring—an opal gleaming in the centre of minute brilliants; when he lifted the beautiful hand to his lips and tried to put the other around her waist, taking a seat beside her, she forgot her recently acquired ideas of decorum and dignity. She was again under the spell of the romantic dream, so often mistaken for the love that comes to lay the foundation of life's truest happiness.

Although Myra had seen more of the world since her father's marriage, she was still extremely inexperienced and impressionable. The flatteries which the young man so adroitly administered went far to win her heart.

An hour or more sped by, and then the girl withdrew herself for the twentieth time from the encircling arm, and the hand from the clasp of her lover.

"You must go now, Fred," she whispered.

"But I may come again, may I not?"

"Sometimes. I will send you word when, and Sylvia shall let you in. Nay, you must go. They will be calling for me. This way; the door opens upon the lawn."

She sat still some time after Hobart had left her, to revel in the pleasant dream.

Strange to say, its pleasantness began to fade directly. While he lingered, and she met his impassioned looks and heard his low, pleading voice, she

felt sure she loved him. When these ceased to affect her senses there came a rushing sense of relief, and she was convinced her heart of hearts was untouched. Involuntarily she let imagination summon another image of manly form and noble countenance, on which was the stamp of high intellect and spotless honour. Instinctively she acknowledged that he from whom she had just parted did not even approach that standard.

She began to take herself to task for inconstancy and deception; for she was not yet able to analyze her own feelings, and to perceive that she had been catching at a mere ignis fatuus, mistaking the dream for the reality.

Is there a susceptible girl of her age, gifted with attractions, who has not passed through the same experience!

There came a tap at the door, and Mrs. Singleton entered.

Her coming into this room was an unprecedented thing; and it fairly startled the girl into the loss of her self-possession.

She trembled as she stood before the lady, whose continual study had been, since she came into the house, to win her confidence, imbue her with prejudice against her father's gentle wife,

"Do not be alarmed, love," said the wily matron, twisting her arms about the young girl's slender form. "I have not come to find fault with you. I leave that to Mrs. Halstead. I am no cruel stepdame, Myra; but I must rescue you when I find you in peril. I know who was your visitor."

"How did you know?" exclaimed the girl, turning quickly, and extricating herself from the sinuous arms.

"I saw him come up the walk with you, dear, and I saw him go out just now. Now, I do not mean to scold you, but you know your papa does not approve of that young man's suit."

"It was only a chance call, aunt. He met me when I was out shopping, and begged to make an explanation, as he thought I had done him injustice. I could not refuse to hear his defence, you know; and I would not hear him anywhere else but at my home."

"You were right in that, darling, and I am glad to see you have such correct ideas of propriety. I can trust you, Myra."

"I hope you can, aunt."

"And you must trust me; for I love you and I love not some one here who does not do you justice. You are not one to be governed by mechanical rules, you ought to judge for yourself in many things."

"So I think. I shall be seventeen in July, you know."

"If I ask you, dear, to place full confidence in me, it is only that I may study your interests and your happiness more disinterestedly, and you will always find me ready to aid you in anything that may promote those ends."

"Thank you!" ejaculated the girl, bestowing a warm caress on the lady.

"I cannot believe it possible," said the latter, "that you love this young man."

"I have been asking myself that question, and I can say truly, as far as I know myself, I am not in love with him, or with any one."

"But he is in love with you?"

"He is, indeed; and I thought I returned his affection, till—till—"

"Till you had an opportunity of seeing other gentlemen, and comparing him with them."

"I suppose it is so."

"That is best for you. Do not accept rashly the proposals of any suitor; but give yourself time to weigh the merits of each, and it is advisable, love, not to receive thus in private any one your father does not welcome. Somebody—you know who—may make it a subject of complaint against you."

"You have told me before, aunt, that papa has been changed in feeling towards me since his marriage. Do you really believe that Clarice—that his wife—has tried to alienate his love from me?"

"How can I tell! Effects do not often come without a cause. But remember, Myra, there is one who loves you as well as if she were your own mother."

The artful woman had indeed the hope of making the girl her daughter-in-law. But she had too much sense to oppose her entanglement with any show of severity. She knew that a foolish romance cannot be driven out of a young heart by authority or reproof.

"Annie," said Myra, after some hesitation, "I wish you would promise me one thing."

"What is it, dear?"

"Do not tell papa or Clarice that Fred Hobart came to see me."

"I would not for the world! I will do more—I will prevent his knowing it from any one else."

"Oh, you are so good to me!"

"In your turn, dear, you must promise me not to

see him here again. He is no match for you, my dear Myra."

"Auntie, if I really loved him I should not care if he were or were not worth a penny of his own."

"Tush, child, you are too young to make a choice yet, and I am glad you are heart-free. You will promise me, will you not?"

"If I should wish to receive a visit from him will you stand by me?"

"I will lend you my own sitting-room in that case. No one could say anything to that."

"Then I will promise you."

"Thank you, my own sweet little girl! Did I tell you Ray was to dine with us?"

"You said nothing about it."

"And I want you to sing that duet from the last opera with him. He is going to leave us shortly."

"Leave us! Ray leave us?"

"He will be absent several weeks. And I must not forget that Lawrence Wyatt will be here this evening. We do not dine till five, as your father will be home by that hour. Shall you have time to practise the duet after you are dressed? I know you will, if you will go to your room now. Let me take you?"

Winding her arm about the girl's waist and smiling upon her, she drew her out of the little boudoir, and saw her ascend the stairs to her chamber.

Then Mrs. Singleton went into the library, where Ray was standing by the window.

"What had Lawrence Wyatt to say?" he asked, after he had taken his seat again.

"He is here but for a week or two, and was anxious to see you. He will come this evening, and I want him to hear the duet you sang yesterday with Myra. She will be down to practise it with you presently."

The young man's eyes sparkled, and his face flushed with pleasure.

"I am glad of that. Do you know, mother, I think Myra vastly improved?"

"In music or manners?" asked the lady, looking up archly.

"She is much more of a woman. Let us hope that the admiration she gets will not turn her pretty head."

"She will outgrow the dangers she becomes used to it. By the way, Ray, I have something to ask you; and you ought to tell me everything, because I must guard the young girl, so dear to us both, from all kinds of danger."

"I do not know what you are driving at, mother!"

"I am sure you know more than the rest of us about the antecedents of Halstead's new wife."

"And what if I do?"

"I am sure—I was always sure—she has a history. And women with histories ought to practise no concealments. Tell me all you know about the lady."

"You have known her as long as I have, and you may be certain Cousin Gilbert must have looked well to the references of a lady he engaged as governess to his daughter."

"And must have been well acquainted with her he asked to be his wife—one would suppose, morbid as Gilbert is on the subject of good family and blameless repute. But I know she has hoodwinked him."

"You should not use such terms, mamma. Cousin Clarice is not designing nor artful."

"You cannot persuade me that you know nothing of her past which her husband does not know."

"I have not tried to persuade you to anything."

"Or that what you know is not discreditable to the lady."

"There you go beyond me, mother. I have no such idea."

"I see, my son, you are not disposed to confide in me, and I will not ask you again."

"A wise resolve! But, mother, do be rational. Suppose I knew anything of my fair cousin's history which she wished to have buried in oblivion, where would be the advantage now of raking it up?"

"It would save Myra from becoming a prey to her scheming."

"What scheming?"

"Oh! you are blind; but I am not. She has wound herself around Gilbert's heart and fancy, till he verily believes that no one else has a claim on his tenderness."

"He is her husband, and he ought to love her."

"Better than his own child?"

"Well, yes—a different sort of love, certainly."

"You will not understand me. I can see that Myra's interests are to suffer, and I am indignant. I can see that Gilbert is befooled, and I am sorry for him."

"Let him take care of himself. As for Myra, I do not see that she stands in need of any interference, or that it would do good."

"Raymond, I have long wished to see that girl your wife, and it was but natural I should look on her as her father's heiress. He will do a great wrong by depriving her of the inheritance she had a right to expect."

"He is too just and honourable, mother, to wrong her or any one, and the matter must not be agitated by you or me. It would be indelicate beyond expression."

"Not if we had a right to speak on Myra's behalf?"

"We could have no such right, unless in an event which I dare not count upon, mother. Now let us change the subject."

They conversed a little while on different topics, and then one of the men-servants came in with a message that Mrs. Myra waited for them in the drawing-room to practise some music.

Ray thought he had never seen her more becomingly dressed.

She wore a delicate pink silk, flounced with the same material, alternated with point appliqué. Her blonde curls fell unrestrained over her shoulders.

It was the colour deeper than usual, and the depth of lustre in her violet eyes, the result of her late conversations, which gave such a charm to her beautiful face.

She did not meet Ray's gaze so frankly as heretofore, and his heart whispered that there was a meaning in her unwonted shyness.

His mother considerably left the young people to themselves.

CHAPTER XVII.

This even-handed justice

Commends the ingredients of our poisoned chalice To our own lips. *Shakespeare.*

COLONEL ATHONTON was not disposed to give up the cause of his young friend Rupert with the fair singer. He could not believe her indifferent to him.

He resolved to penetrate the mystery that raised a barrier between them, and for that purpose went to call upon her the day following that evening when he had supped in her company after the opera.

At an earlier hour in the morning Madame Brentano was dressed and in her parlour, waiting to receive a visit she dreaded unutterably, while she compelled herself to undergo the trial for the sake of securing her own safety. She gave her orders to the servant, and sat down to write letters in the interval.

Martin Blake did not fail to present himself. He was dressed more carefully than usual; but no refinement of attire could disguise the coarseness of his nature. His swarthy complexion, his masses of black hair, heavy eyebrows, and small, deep-set eyes, with thick, sensual lips, gave an aspect of ferocity to his countenance, mingled with the dullness belonging to the habitual indulgence in spirituous liquors. His usually late hours produced exhaustion which he sought to banish by liberal potations. If he had ever worn the exterior of a gentleman, he had lost it irretrievably in years of evil courses.

The lady rose to receive him. Her face was grave and stern. She was attired with scrupulous plainness; but no lack of decoration could hide the regal beauty of her face and form. The colour she generally had had deserted her cheeks, but her compressed mouth showed the firmness and decision of her character, and her large, almond-shaped eyes were like those of an Oriental queen. Few who came into her presence could fail to acknowledge the power of a grand and noble nature.

Martin advanced, with an outstretched hand, but she did not respond, merely motioning him to a chair. He dropped into it, growling curses under his breath.

"I promised you an interview," said the sweet, clear voice of the lady, "because I see the necessity of having matters settled between us."

"I am glad you do so," replied the man, gazing steadily upon her. "It is what I have been wanting some time."

"I wish you to understand me, sir. I will not reproach you either with the past or with your late annoying pursuit of me."

"Gad! I should think not; a husband's coming to his wife ought not to annoy her, but to be welcome at all times."

"You cannot but remember that our relations as husband and wife were terminated years since by your own desire and determination."

"But to be resumed, Florence, when I chose to reclaim you. Recollect what I said: 'when you earn a fortune I will come and help you to spend it.' That's just what I intend to do."

"That is just what you cannot do, sir."

"What! you mean to repudiate your husband?"

"I do not mean to acknowledge you as such."

"You cannot help it," retorted the man, with a chuckling laugh. "Come, come, Florence, give up

this fancy of independence. You are vastly improved since I left you, and now you are worth claiming, for you can help me make money. I do not mean to allow you to escape me."

"You mean to compel me to live with you again?"

"Just so, my queen, and the law will be on my side in doing it, too."

"You will find yourself mistaken, Martin Blake. I will never live with you; I will never bear your name; I will never acknowledge you."

"You mean to pass yourself off as a single woman, and marry Rupert Edgerly, eh? Two words to that. If he dares to come near you, madam, I will shoot him."

There was no lack of colour now in Florence's cheeks, nor of a flash in her brilliant eyes. But she controlled herself before she answered.

"I will not reply to taunts you know to be idle and absurd. You have my decision. If you are in need, I will give you what money I have to give. I will never again be your wife."

Blake checked the wild fury that leaped to his lips, and bent towards the lady, leaning his elbows on the table between them.

"Your money belongs to me," he said, in a tone of concentrated determination; "and you know I can find out the way to take everything from you. But why drive me to this, Florence? Listen to me: I love you, Florence. You are ten times as handsome as when we parted. I love you, and I must and will have you! You are mine; you gave yourself to me, and promised to love and cherish me; to take me for better for worse. I was a madman when I threw you from me; for I had no idea I should ever like you so well! Come, now, submit to your fate like a reasonable woman. You liked me well enough to run away from school and marry me at sixteen; you will like me again. I have come for you; and I mean to take you back to myself."

"There is no need of wasting words, Mr. Blake; I will never return to you."

"We will see to that."

"Beware how you force me to protect myself by the hold I have upon you."

"What is that, pray?"

"Would you like me to tell you?"

"Certainly, if you have such a thing."

Florence looked around the room, as if measuring her chance of escape in case the desperate villain should attempt violence. She moved her chair nearer to the door leading into her chamber, hearing footsteps without, and gathered up her courage.

"I will not return to you, Martin Blake," she said, "not merely because you made my life miserable, and drove me out friendless to battle with a hard, cold world; but because your life has been, and is still, a series of crimes that outrage humanity. You have lived for years on the plunder of the innocent; you have crowned your many robberies with the guilt of murder."

"What do you mean?"

"You cannot have forgotten the last of your victims—Arthur Gore."

The man's face blanched to a death-like pallor, and with difficulty he retained his seat, clutching at the arms of the chair in his nervousness.

"Much you know about it!" he hissed, as soon as he could utter a word.

"I know more than you think. I was there in that house in search of you! I saw that poor man dying; I received his last confession, and his implication of you in a robbery and murder some weeks before. He accused you of leading him into crime and then murdering him to escape detection."

Blake sprang to his feet.

"It is false!" he thundered, his eyes blazing with defiance, while his burly frame shook from head to foot.

Florence had hold of the knob of the door. She was brave of spirit, but her woman's nature quailed before brutal violence.

She faced her enemy, however, and her eyes were fixed intently on his face, where his guilt was fully betrayed.

"How dare you, woman, repeat such a falsehood?" he cried, with a burst of profanity.

She answered him with calmness, still standing by the door, and repressing the shivering of her limbs by bracing herself against it.

"You know, Martin Blake, that the dying man spoke truly, and that he died by your hand."

The cold perspiration stood on the man's forehead, and he wiped it off.

With an effort recovering himself, he laughed a mirthless laugh.

"And you think to frighten me with such a story, supported by the word of a fever-stricken idiot at the last gasp!"

"Not supported only by his word! Mr. Blake, remember, you have driven me to this!"

"What else supports it?"

"Proofs—indisputable proofs!"

"Woman, you are mad!"

"You remember your search in the cabin for papers, which you thought the dead man had destroyed?"

"Well! He had destroyed some papers."

"He had not destroyed them! He made me unlock that cabinet, giving me the key, and he gave me the papers!"

"What!"

"He placed those proofs in my hands, and with his last breath bade me keep them for my own protection! I have done so, Martin. I hold those proofs."

"You do!" muttered the savage, making a stride towards his wife, while his face became ghastly, and his gasping breath husky with terror.

"No nearer, Martin, no nearer! I can summon help in an instant! Hear me! You will not get those proofs by killing me. They are not in this house."

A deep oath interrupted her.

"I foresaw this. I knew you would track me and persecute me, as soon as you found me in possession of money! I have held those papers only to save myself from you. Let us now come to terms!"

"What are your terms?" asked Blake, sulkily.

"That you leave me unmolested, undisturbed. If you will do that, I will give you some money from time to time, as much as I can, and will promise never to produce those proofs."

"You shall give them up to me! Where are they?"

"In a locked casket, with my jewels, at the bank. They are safe from human eye, as long as you leave me alone."

"Give them to me and I will promise to obey you."

"I cannot part with them; they are my only protection."

He broke into another volley of imprecations.

"You will see, on reflection, Martin, how much better it is for you to comply with my wishes. Now, will you have money? The first instalment of what I will pay you as long as you leave me in peace."

With a grunt of assent the man flung himself into his seat.

Florence went to her desk and took out a roll of bank-notes, which she laid on the table.

Her worthless husband was not long in transferring those to his pocket.

"I will send you more in two months," said Florence, "if my conditions are observed. Give me an address."

He scrawled a line on the back of a card and pushed it towards her.

"May I beg, now, that this interview may be ended? I feel very faint."

He rose and moved towards the door.

"You may rue this yet, madam," he said, with bitter emphasis. "You cannot wipe out one fact—that you are my wife!"

As he opened the door he saw a man who had just entered.

Blake passed the visitor without looking at him, pulling his own hat over his brow. But before he did this he was recognized. In another moment he had passed through the hall and gone out.

The other tapped at the door of the parlour. It was opened by Madame Brontano's maid.

"I am very sorry, sir, that my lady cannot see anybody. She has been taken suddenly ill and has gone to her chamber."

The gentleman handed a card to the girl and left the house.

It was Colonel Atherton, and he had overheard the last words of Martin Blake.

They rang in his ears as he went down the street. He could hardly at once take in the full horror of their meaning.

"His wife! The wife of that villain!" he mentally exclaimed. "And he has been there to bully her, or extort money from her! Poor Rupert! Poor girl! I pity her most of the two!"

(To be continued.)

THE ladies have taken Sir Henry James at his word. He made a proposal to the whole of the ladies of Taunton—namely that if they would show that half their number were for women's suffrage, he would support it; 300 out of the 560 ladies of Taunton have sent him a petition, and he must keep his word.

A NOVEL dining-table is in use in one of the palaces of the Emperor of Russia. The table is circular, and is placed on a weighted platform. At the touch of a signal, like a rub of Aladdin's lamp, down goes the table through the floor, and a new table,

loaded with fresh dishes and supplies, rises in its place. But this is not all: each plate stands on a weighted disc, the table-cloth being cut with circular openings, one for each plate. If a guest desires a change of plate he touches a signal at his side, when his plate disappears, and another rises. These mechanical dining-tables render the presence of servants quite superfluous.

THE TEETH.

It is one of the first precepts of health and beauty to keep the teeth in the best order, and from the age of two years every child should be provided with its own toothbrush or tooth-sponge, and taught to use it both morning and night; for the mischief of bad teeth, and consequently bad breath, commences at the earliest stages of life, and at about eleven years most of the permanent teeth are in place. Especial heed should be taken, however, to retain the "baby teeth" as long as possible, for when they are so loose as to nearly fall out the second set are close at hand and can then be made to assume a more regular and symmetrical appearance. But if they will not come evenly, but will lap over each other, recourse must be had to the dentist's skill to make them do so. With his appliances they can be set back, and a mouth that would have been very unattractive from the irregularity of the upper or lower teeth can really be made very handsome. We have seen this done in one particular case, when the child's teeth came very irregularly; but by the pressure of gold clasps they were fairly pushed into regularity and beauty, and now the young lady possesses a rarely handsome mouth. Thus it behoves parents to attend to these little things in childhood.

Often the teeth will seem too many for the size of the upper jaw, and they push forward with a disagreeable prominence which is destructive to beauty. When this is the case, one tooth should be extracted on each side of the jaw, and then the teeth will gradually recede and fill up the vacant spaces. These double teeth should be extracted between the age of eleven and twelve years, for then the jaws are still growing, and the teeth have an opportunity to be set back. We recommended the following plan to be adopted with a young girl whose front teeth were very large and projecting. A promise of a sovereign produced a willingness upon the girl's part to endure the pain of extraction, and the results are highly satisfactory, for her greatest charm is in her purely white and evenly-shaped teeth and exceedingly pleasing smile.

Our teeth, like other parts of the body, require to be well used—I.e. we should chew our food thoroughly, and on both sides of the jaws; then cleanse them well after each meal, rinsing the mouth often, as we have before advised. They were, however, never intended to be used as nutcrackers, and if put to such uses will invariably be injured, as the most minute flaw in the enamel leads to decay, and the act of crushing hard substances cannot fail to seriously injure either the nerve, socket, or surface of the teeth.

The use of toothpicks is very common among the French, and it is an excellent practice for the teeth; but it is considered quite an offence to good manners to use them at the table. Yet we can recommend them to all our readers, to be used in their apartments, and can assure them that the more they clean their teeth with them, the longer will they keep them in beauty and usefulness.

We have said that cleanliness is the greatest desideratum in preserving the teeth; and now we will talk about the choice of the toothbrush, which is also an all-important thing, as many persons seriously injure their teeth by using hard brushes, and as if were rubbing the gums away from the teeth and thus causing them to become loose and fall out. When the gums of a person who uses such toothbrushes are examined they are often found to be more or less destroyed towards the roots of the teeth, thus denuding the latter by drawing from them the supply of blood needful to their vitality, and producing preternatural decay. No specimen of hogs' bristles can well be too soft for this use, and when employed with a suitable dentifrice, they answer every purpose. In some cases of irritable gums it is well to do away with the toothbrush entirely, and use a sponge rubber, which is easily made by fastening a piece of soft sponge to the handle of a worn-out toothbrush. This instrument is very desirable for the use of young children as well as for grown persons. There is apt to grow upon some persons' teeth a species of false enamel or tartar, which, if allowed to remain, will push the gum farther and farther back until it leaves the fangs of the teeth quite bare above the true enamel, so that even sound teeth are destroyed by it. This false enamel must be carefully removed, for the gum will no more grow over the least particle of it than the flesh will heal over the point of a thorn.

Ripe strawberries rubbed upon the teeth are very

serviceable in removing tartar and the yellow substances which sometimes appear. When the toothache, with its agonizing pangs, assails us, we are often told that cold steel is the only permanent remedy—but if we are near to a dentist of good reputation we can find relief at his hands without the application of instruments. A drop of creosote and a mite of arsenic will destroy the aching nerve in a few hours, and then the dentist's skill can fill up the aperture with gold or cement, and the tooth is "amaist as gude as new." But if we are miles from the dentist, a bit of cotton dipped into chloroform will drive away the pain, and then if we can procure a small bit of gutta serena, and soften it in boiling water, and press it into the tooth firmly, and smooth it down with the finger several times, hardening it by holding cold water on that side for a few moments, the tooth will be made serviceable for many years to come.

For an outward application for toothache we have also found the following beneficial: Take ten drops of essence of bergamot, and mix with it six drachms of spirits of camphor, and two drachms of solution of ammonia. Put two drops on a bit of cotton and apply to the aching nerve.

The following is an invaluable wash for the teeth: Dissolve two ounces of powdered borax in three pints of hot water. Before quite cold add one tablespoonful of spirits of camphor, and two tablespoonfuls of tincture of myrrh; bottle and cork tightly. Add one wineglass of this mixture to a tumbler of warmish water, morning and evening, and apply it with a soft brush or sponge rubber. This solution will preserve and beautify the teeth, arrest incipient decay, and produce a healthy action on the gums, and is the best thing wherewith to rinse the mouth.

It is an easy thing to whiten the teeth by the use of acids or corrosive substances, but these will invariably injure the enamel, and thus produce decay. The following recipe for tooth-powder possesses three essential virtues; giving an odorous breath, preserving the enamel, and cleansing and preserving the gums: Powdered orris root, half an ounce; powdered Peruvian bark, one ounce; prepared chalk, one ounce; powdered charcoal, two ounces; oil of bergamot, or lavender, 20 drops. These ingredients must be reduced to an impalpable powder and thoroughly mixed in a druggist's mortar.

THE STRANGE MECHANIC.

Or Stuart the following anecdote is related: He had put up at an inn, and his companions were desirous, by putting roundabout questions, to find out his calling or profession. Stuart answered, with a grave face and serious tone, that he sometimes dressed gentlemen's and ladies' hair. At that time high-cropped, pomatumed hair was all the fashion.

"You are a hair-dresser, then?"

"What," said he, "do I look like a barber?"

"I beg your pardon, sir, but I inferred it from what you said. If I mistook you, may I take the liberty to ask what you are, then?"

"Why I sometimes brush a gentleman's coat or hat, and sometimes adjust a cravat."

"Oh, you are a valet, then, to some nobleman?"

"A valet! Indeed I am not. I am no servant. To be sure, I make coats and waistcoats for gentlemen."

"Oh, you are a tailor."

"A tailor? Do I look like a tailor? I assure you I never handled a goose, other than a roasted one."

"By this time they were all in a roar."

"What are you, then?" said one.

"I'll tell you," said Stuart. "Be assured, all I have said is literally true. I dress hair, brush hats and coats, adjust a cravat, and make coats, waistcoats and breeches, and likewise boots and shoes, at your service."

"Oh, ho! a boot and shoemaker, after all!"

"Guess again, gentlemen. I never handled boot or shoe but for my own feet and legs; yet all I have told you is true."

"We may as well give up guessing."

"Well, then, I will give you, upon my honour as a gentleman, my bona fide profession. I get my bread by making faces."

He then screwed his countenance, twisted the lineaments of his visage, in a manner such as Samuel Foote or Charles Matthews might have envied. His companions, after loud peals of laughter, each took credit to himself for having suspected that the gentleman belonged to the theatre, and they all knew he must be a comedian by profession, when, to their utter astonishment, he assured them that he was never on the stage, and very rarely saw the inside of a playhouse, or any similar place of amusement. They all now looked at each other in utter amazement. Before parting, Stuart said to his companions:

"Gentlemen, you will find that all I have said of my various employments is comprised in these few words. I am a portrait painter! If you will call I

shall be ready and willing to brush you a coat or hat, dress your hair à la mode, supply you, if in need, with a wig of any fashion or dimensions, accommodate you with boots or shoes, give you ruffles or cravat, and make faces for you."

JOSEPHINE BEAUVILLIERS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Lady Juliette's Secret," "The Rose of Kemdale," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Nor gives it satisfaction to our blood

That we must curb it upon other's proof,

To be forbid the sweets that seem so good

For fear of harms that preach in our behoof.

Shakespeare.

In the recess of the bay window stood Chatteris.

Josephine uttered a cry of surprise. She stepped backwards, but Chatteris advanced to meet her, holding out both hands towards her in an imploring attitude.

"Josephine," he said, "you must pardon me for this ruse, by which I have managed to see you once more. I sought for you everywhere, I inquired on all hands; but every trace of you seemed lost in the town of Northwick St. John's. I called at your father's, but I was positively there denied admittance. I never managed once to get speech of him. All kinds of reports were current, but I heeded them not, although they distressed me in a measure."

Josephine did not ask what these reports were.

Meanwhile her good friend, the farmer, looked with an eye of astonishment mingled with suspicion at the handsome face and form of the young officer.

Josephine had never mentioned his name, and yet there seemed to be a complete understanding between these young persons.

The pallor and alternate blushing of Josephine, the glowing cheek, sparkling eye, and agitated voice of Chatteris, all proved that this pair were old friends, if not lovers—and yet there had been something strictly honourable in the request made by Chatteris that Miss Beauvilliers should not come to Langley unprotected or without witnesses.

The good farmer was puzzled to understand what it all meant. He looked with an eye half-suspicious, half-kindly upon Chatteris. As yet he had not spoken. He took a seat, and satisfied himself with listening attentively to the conversation between the strange young gentleman and the beautiful Josephine.

"I saw in the paper your advertisement for a situation," said Chatteris, "and instinct pointed out to me that the person named was yourself. I wrote and discovered the truth of the surmise, and then I resolved to put myself in direct communication with you. If you really are in want of such a situation, why should you not accept one in the family of Miss Woodville?"

Josephine started—a pallor overspread her beautiful features, her dark blue eyes sparkled, they almost blazed—astonishment, pain, indignation, almost anger, flashed from beneath her long lashes.

"Miss Woodville!" she echoed.

"I hasten to explain," cried Chatteris, in an agitated voice. "You know"—and here he turned partially and apologetically towards the farmer—"you are aware that I am about to marry Miss Woodville."

He paused, and seemed to swallow this unpleasant fact with a great effort.

"I am about to marry Miss Woodville," he repeated. "Miss Woodville requires a lady companion, whom she will remunerate very handsomely. I believe she will give a hundred and fifty pounds a year. She has commissioned me to look out for such a lady. After we are married this lady may or may not accompany us upon our marriage tour, but I rather think not; and in that case nothing will be easier than to procure another situation, going from such a house as Stoneleigh Priory. There is no occasion for Miss Woodville to know how much pains I took especially to find you out."

"And yet," continued Chatteris, "I have freely and frankly confessed to her that you had won my heart, Josephine, before my circumstances became so desperate. I told her, however, that every rebellious thought was set at rest, and I had conquered my foolish passion. For what could a penniless and ruined man offer you, save care and poverty? And so, Josephine, Miss Woodville listened to me calmly, kindly and patiently. She is actuated now by no angry jealousy towards you. On the contrary, she expressed the greatest kindness, the most generous sympathy. She asked me if I would try and seek you out. 'And then,' said she, 'we might place her somewhere near to us. Many ladies would be glad of a companion so elegant, so amiable, so talented. She was very

much burdened here—in the town of Northwick St. John's—with the support of her whole family. She is gone away, nobody knows whither, except perhaps her father, who has probably placed her in some hard position, where she has to labour from morning till night, and probably she sends all her earnings home to him here. I wish, therefore, you would seek her out, Chatteris.' I did not tell her, Josephine, but at that very time I was engaged in searching for you on all sides eagerly. Three days afterwards I saw your advertisement. Instinct told me that it was yours. I sought you out—and now you know the whole. You have only to accept Miss Woodville's offer, you have only to state that you are willing to come, and the matter is settled."

"This is all very fine," cried the farmer, "and I have no reason whatever, sir, to doubt you—at the same time this young lady is under my protection, and I cannot permit her to go unless I myself place her under the protection of Miss Woodville."

Chatteris smiled.

"I desire nothing better, my dear sir," he said. "Why, you could not imagine that I intended to insult Miss Beauvilliers by inviting her to accompany me alone to Stoneleigh Priory! If you would be good enough to conduct her there, after she has heard from Miss Woodville, I shall be only too thankful to you."

"My missis and I will both take her," cried the farmer.

So it was settled; at least, it only remained for Josephine to receive a letter from Miss Woodville.

And then Chatteris invited the farmer, his son, and Josephine, to partake of a handsome lunch.

The conduct of the young man was studiously polite, excessively respectful towards Josephine.

He managed to banish everything lovelier from his words and his actions. His eloquent eyes though spoke in spite of himself. The farmer, however, did not perceive those love glances. The young gentleman conversed with him on crops, weather and politics, and the farmer soon formed a high opinion of him.

Josephine, however, was not so blind to the state of Chatteris's feelings.

She knew too that her own responded to them. She comprehended clearly that her new position would be fraught with danger. Nay, more than that, she had deep and strong suspicion regarding the sincerity of Miss Woodville. And yet with all this Josephine felt that her love was more powerful than her wisdom.

The charm which Chatteris exercised over her was like a fatal spell, a bewildering fascination from which she could not escape. And she told herself that since Miss Woodville sought her out, and offered her an asylum in her house, she would accept the situation, do her duty there, and drink in the too dear delight of listening to the voice of Chatteris occasionally, and looking upon that face which was to her a sight bright and blessed as the face of the sun.

When the lunch was over the farmer rose to take his leave, he could not afford to spend the whole day away from the fields of the Rye House.

Chatteris accompanied them to the station, there he grasped the hand of Josephine in parting—there was a look of mute anguish in his dark eyes which startled Miss Beauvilliers.

When the train was in motion she asked herself, with a girl's wonder, why he should look so sad; for her part, her innocent heart was dancing with joy at the prospect of so soon being thrown into his way, of conversing with him, or at least looking upon his face daily.

She had made up her mind long ago to the fact that she was never to be his wife, and since she had never been engaged to him—never possessed him as her affianced and acknowledged lover, she had never had to go through the fearful ordeal of loss, she had simply loved romantically, but hopelessly, she had never been disappointed or deceived. And now the lady whom he was about to marry had offered her an asylum, and handsome remuneration in her family, not because she was a lovelorn damsel, pining for a lost lover, but because Chatteris had once entertained a romantic fancy for her, and Miss Woodville wished to show how generous she could be, how noble, how unsuspecting. What large sympathies she had for all in whom he had ever taken an interest. Josephine tried to regard the affair in this light, and she succeeded. It is easy for us to believe that which we wish to believe.

Only that look of Chatteris haunted her with its wild expression of pent-up passion.

It was as though she had been permitted to glance into a cave where a chained lion was confined—a noble beast, but savage, maddened, furious. Oh! if that chain were broken!

Something like a shudder passed over Josephine. That night she had a strange dream. She thought that she was wandering through some delightful garden, where the breeze was balmy as the air that blew through Eden; large trees whispered and

rustled and threw great shadows on the rich green turf, where grow flowers of all hues; a stream of crystal water flowed between foliated banks down to a grove where giant fruit trees held out their loaded branches in high relief against the blue sky.

It seemed that fruits and flowers of all seasons and all climes were ripe and blooming together. And herein was an evil omen, those would say who are learned in dream lore.

Yellow and purple grapes were trained in heavy clusters, from tree to tree, and yet scarlet strawberries those coral treasures of June, enamelled the ground.

The blooming peach, and the white-heart cherry grew ripe and ruddy side by side. Tufts of violets and primroses were interspersed between beds blazing with the glory of the verbena and the geranium.

The sound of music came on the breeze, and then Josephine, through an opening in the trees, saw a party of brightly clad dames and noble gentlemen dancing to the strains of some unearthly and weird music.

Soon she began to distinguish the forms and faces of some of the dancers—the beautiful Marian with her long flaxen hair falling on her shoulders floated by in the arms of the dwarf Potowski. Ludicrous he looked, his huge head not reaching her elbow, his small arms grasping her white skirts. She seemed the very incarnation of grace, while he represented the type of the grotesque and absurd.

They passed out of sight, and the next couple that Josephine recognized was none other than Chatteris and the humpbacked heiress. It seemed that Chatteris did not perceive her, but the malignant eyes of Elfrida Woodville fixed themselves with a wicked gleam on the face of Josephine, and at the same moment a loud thunder-clap echoed through the enchanted garden—trees, flowers, fruits, dancers, all disappeared. In place of them Josephine saw only an angry flood rolling, roaring, foaming—the water was dark and discoloured. She was swept away by it. It overwhelmed her.

On all sides she perceived only this discoloured water, except that against the far horizon stood large blue hills, calm and still, and changeless. On, on, swept the flood, and she along with it.

She was approaching now a black cavern, and if once she should be carried within its dark recesses she felt that her fate would be death.

But before she was dashed into the blackness of this terrible place she awoke with a start, trembling in every limb, and wondering what this dream foreboded—the flood and the darkness that followed upon the passing by of the heiress.

"I feel convinced," said Josephine to herself, "that Miss Woodville is my enemy. I am doing wrong, I fear, in entering her house. My looks will betray my love when in the presence of Chatteris. I had better not enter Stoneleigh Priory—that great mansion where my poor grandmother met with her fate. I may meet with mine there—and yet—and yet I have not strength of mind to resist this tempting offer."

And then she took a prudent view of the case, and told herself that the large salary she was to receive should, and ought to be a great consideration for a penniless girl in her circumstances.

Finally, she decided that she would go. She would enter the enchanted garden of her dream. And if the flood came and desolation and death—well, she would have seen Chatteris, she would have lived in the atmosphere blessed by his presence, she would have listened to his voice, looked upon his face and felt the loving clasp of his hand once more.

In short, Josephine Beauvilliers was falling now more deeply and fervently in love with Chatteris than she had ever fallen.

It was a new phase in her existence, this sudden meeting with him again. She had imagined she had forgotten him, or, at least, that she had schooled herself into patience, and she found that she was wrong.

The days passed on, and there came a kindly and polite note from Miss Woodville, expressing everything that was feminine and sympathetic and generous.

"I have heard so much of you from my dear Chatteris," wrote the heiress, "that I feel convinced there must be a bond of sympathy between us. Come to Stoneleigh Priory and consider it as your home."

The master of the Rye House and his good wife considered that the fortune of their protégée was indeed made.

The day arrived which was to see them start for the neighbourhood of Northwick St. John's, where stood Stoneleigh Priory.

Josephine's arrangements were soon made; her small baggage was packed, and she was equipped ready to start. It was within two days of the month of June. The whole country burst out into blossom and foliage; the birds were singing in every green tree, but yet a dark cloud hung over

the wide landscape like a portent of evil. Thunder was surely lurking within its dark bosom—thunder and storm and peril.

Josephine, with her finely strung nerves, and highly organized temperament, was keenly alive to every atmospheric change. A foreboding chill crept over her. She stood under the rustic porch of the Rye House, awaiting the arrival of the farmer's good wife. In a little while that lady arrived. Josephine's little neatly packed trunk was carried by one of the farm boys.

At the garden gate they encountered the farmer and his eldest son, and the little cavalcade proceeded towards the station.

Though Josephine had never ventured beyond the precincts of the Rye House alone since the day of entering it. Her terror of the Lady Vengea had subsided of late, and she trusted that that extraordinary if not insane personage had forgotten her during her subsequent exciting discussions and violent rupture with the Count Potowski.

But while walking along the country road under the dark sky she perceived approaching her at some distance a carriage which she recognized. The liveries, the horses, were those appertaining to Tempestcloud Castle.

Josephine clung convulsively to the arm of the farmer.

"Lady Vengea—Lady Vengea is coming!" she said.

The farmer stood firm as a rock, and smiled a calm and kindly smile upon the beautiful face of Josephine.

"You have nothing to fear," he said; "the law will protect you. The Lady Vengea has no right to lay a finger upon you. Nay, she has more reason to fear you—for you could proceed against her at once for unlawful detention, and in any court you might recover heavy damages."

"But my father?" said Josephine. "You will remember that I am much under age, and my father can force me to return to the Lady Vengea. Anything for money!"

Josephine wrung her hands, and began to weep.

"It is hard to say so of one's father—but it is no less true that papa thinks all other sufferings are as naught compared with the want of means. It is nothing to him that the Lady Vengea is mad and dangerous, capable, I verily believe, of murder. Oh! here she comes! Hide me, hide me!"

But the lane was enclosed by tall banks, on the summits of which grew high hedges of hawthorn. There were no means of escaping.

The farmer drew the arm of Josephine tightly within his own, his wife and study son brought up the rear. And now behold them close to the carriage of the Lady Vengea.

The tall footman recognized Miss Beauvilliers, and almost at the same moment the remarkable head of the weird lady was thrust out of the window. She called upon her servants to stop, and the carriage was drawn up in such a manner as to obstruct the farther progress of the farmer and his family.

Lady Vengea's gray hair was surmounted by a bonnet of crimson velvet, ornamented with feathers of the same hue, a shawl of white crape was fastened by a brooch formed of an immense ruby. Her attenuated face looked hard, scornful, mocking. It did not so much express wrath, as an unmeasured contempt.

"Do not be afraid," she said, "do not imagine that I am about to carry you off. I have known all about you for a long time. I could have pounced upon you any moment, and with your father's full consent. But I wash my hands of you now altogether. I have withdrawn my bounty from your father, so that he is once more starving upon his sixty pounds a year. He was very extravagant, and soon ran through the money I sent him. You need not imagine, mademoiselle, that I am going to trouble myself any longer in regard to your affairs. Ingratitude such as yours merits but one mode of treatment, the bitterest contempt, and that I deal out to you in the fullest measure."

Lady Vengea then signed to her coachman to drive on. He wheeled the carriage about, causing the party of pedestrians to start aside suddenly, and then the carriage drove off at a great pace.

Josephine proceeded with her friends to the station.

It was a relief to her to know that she was safe from the glittering yet deadly patronage of the Lady Vengea, at the same time she could not but feel a pang, but at the news which she heard of her father, whom, with all his faults she loved so tenderly—that he was again starving upon his sixty pounds a year.

"But," thought she to herself, "I can soon send him money." I shall only retain enough for bare necessities.

And then she resolved that she would sell the jewels, the gift of Lady Vengea, and send the money to her father.

Arrived at the station, and the places taken, Josephine and her protectors were soon fairly on

their way to Northwick St. John's. It was a journey by rail of about two hours and a half.

Arrived there, Josephine discovered that the Stoneleigh Priory carriage was awaiting her arrival.

The farmer's family hesitated somewhat before taking their places in this magnificent equipage; but, reflecting that Josephine was unprotected, the farmer came to the conclusion that it was only right for him to see her to the end of her journey. Accordingly they all proceeded towards the Woodville mansion. Arrived there, they were shown into a splendid ante-chamber, and here, after a little while, Miss Woodville entered.

The heiress, or, more properly speaking, the mistress of Stoneleigh Priory, was simply clad on this occasion in a plainly made dress of violet-coloured silk. She wore no ornaments, no jewels of any kind, only a plain white collar and cuffs, and her thick raven hair was arranged in heavy plaits. But it seemed to Josephine that Elfrida had certainly grown plainer than ever, if that were possible. Her complexion was muddy and sallow, her aquint was more palpable than ever, her black eyebrows met in a thicker and more obstinate knot above the bridge of her coarse, hooked nose. Her figure too seemed to have increased in bulk, and her hump seemed larger. It was, no doubt, all of it fancy. Josephine had been a long while without seeing Miss Woodville, and had partially forgotten the outward appearance of that lady.

The farmer's son opened his large round eyes—he had not been greatly tutored in politeness—and he could hardly restrain an exclamation of surprise.

Miss Woodville bowed, stared a little rudely for a well-bred lady at the excellent country people who had accompanied Josephine, and then advanced, extending her hand, exclaiming:

"Ah! Miss Beauvilliers, charmed to see you. Welcome to Stoneleigh Priory."

Josephine rose, bowed, and sat down again, almost in school-girl fashion. She was timid, she blushed and trembled in the presence of her new mistress, for assuredly Miss Woodville was her mistress. She felt that from the moment the lady of the Priory entered the room.

"You will take some refreshment?" said Miss Woodville, coldly, addressing the family of the farmer.

But the farmer's independent spirit rose against the contemptuously offered hospitality. He stood upon his feet, drew his stalwart form to its utmost height, and then bowed respectfully to the lady of the Priory.

"I thank you much, madam," he said, "but we will not intrude a moment longer. I ought to apologize for coming at all. But this young lass is a pretty lass and a good lass, and she has nobody just now to stand up for her, and so I did not like to let her travel alone, and I have brought her here that I might place her safely under your protection."

The good farmer could scarcely have hit upon a speech less likely to recommend Josephine to the kindly sympathies of the ugly Miss Woodville.

"A pretty lass, forsooth," thought she herself, "too beautiful, I conjecture, to travel alone. She must needs have this clodhopping farmer, his booby son, and stout wife to protect her. They regard her evidently in the same light in which Chatteris does—a Dresden china shepherdess, who ought to be kept under a glass shade, a hothouse plant, whom a breath of wind would slay. Very well, we will take care of her."

Then Miss Woodville turned once more towards the farmer.

"I regret very much," she said, "that you will take no refreshment. Good morning. Miss Beauvilliers, will you come this way?"

But first of all Josephine clung affectionately to her friend, the farmer's wife, and shook hands heartily with the farmer and his son.

"Thanks, thanks, my dear kind friends," she said, "I am not ungrateful! I will write to you often."

Then she followed Miss Woodville from the room.

"By Jove!" cried the farmer's son, as he was accompanying his parents down the broad steps leading from the Priory, "what a squint and a hump she has. I would rather marry Bessie Butterly, the dairyman's daughter at Langley, without a penny in her purse, than yonder ugly woman, if she had cellars full of gold and diamonds."

CHAPTER XXX.

Oh villains, vipers!
Dogs easily won to fawn on any man,
Snakes in my heart blood warmed that
sting my heart. *Shakespeare.*

No news of Diana—day followed day, and the hearts of her parents grew sick with hope deferred. The rumour of her mysterious disappearance reached that detective wit whom Diana had plotted for the recovery of the Jewels.

Seeing that this was had assumed so serious an

aspect, this man came forward now, and volunteered all the information in his power.

Then it was that Mrs. Dalby, the townspeople, and even Colonel Hastings began to surmise that they had wronged Diana. There had been no secret or clandestine lover. She had really been actuated by a generous impulse, when she had rushed so wildly through the night with the intention of restoring the jewels to the colonel.

The story of the robbery in the barn met with full credence from some, but was received with suspicion by others.

Colonel Hastings now thoroughly believed in the truth, purity and singleness of purpose of the girl whom he had loved. He met the detective face to face, and recognized him again, examined his credentials, and then acknowledged how utterly without foundation had been his suspicions of the beautiful daughter of the doctor.

True, she had ceased to love him, nay, she never had loved him, and here had been her weakness, in that she had not known her own mind from the first. She had never disgraced herself by a clandestine and vulgar attachment.

She had been the victim doubtless, a second time, of the odious woman of the barn, who discovering that she was in communication with the detective, had tracked her out, and probably murdered her. And now to find the murderess, to discover the jewels, was all that could be thought of for the present.

We, who are in the secret, who know the true culprits, may fairly stand aghast with astonishment at the depth of conceit, the phlegmatic unconcern with which the two chief actors in this terrible drama contemplated the excitement, the anguish, the anxiety of the friends of Diana, and the commotion which the mysterious occurrence occasioned in the little town of Northwick St. John's.

Mrs. Childerstone received her cheque for a hundred and eighty pounds, the purchase of an imaginary house in Worcestershire, and Mrs. Wilcox, wise Mrs. Wilcox, lay all this time out of the money, and never once attempted to offer the diamonds and rubies for sale.

They were locked safely into a strong mahogany box, and this box was placed in a deep drawer of a strong oaken chest, which chest was placed close to Mrs. Wilcox's bed-head.

No eye had seen those sparkling treasures, since the night when Diana lost them in the barn, save the eyes of Mrs. Childerstone and Mrs. Wilcox. Not a shadow of suspicion pointed to either of these persons. Indeed how should it, seeing that the detective had not arrived in the neighbourhood of Northwick St. John's, until some time after the establishment of Mrs. Childerstone at Dighting's Farm, as the housekeeper of Mr. Hamer.

As for Mrs. Wilcox, that lady was not only above all suspicion, but enjoyed a reputation for sanctity scarcely equalled and certainly not excelled by any personage in town or country.

Mrs. Wilcox paid periodical visits to the afflicted family in St. Peter's Street. It was her policy to repudiate the idea that any harm had befallen Diana, and in this system of argument she appeared to be actuated by the purest philanthropic motives, the desire of assuaging the anguish of the mourning parents, and of holding out to them a hope of the return one day, of their lovely but unfortunat child.

Spring was fast ripening into summer.

It was a warm, brilliant afternoon in June, and Mrs. Wilcox sat in a small back parlour, used only in summer time.

It was on the ground floor, and opened by means of a French window upon the pleasant flower garden, which had been poor Diana's especial hobby.

The room was furnished in green—green carpet, green chairs, green sofa. The white lace curtains were gently swayed in and out by the breeze.

A tea equipage, plates of thin new bread and butter freshly out, a little china teapot, pretty cups and saucers, a large dish full of strawberries, a crystal bowl filled with powdered loaf-sugar, a great jug full of cream, testified to the hospitality of the doctor's wife.

Mrs. Wilcox had taken off the large straw hat which she wore during hot weather. She had placed it on the little sofa, and she sat now with her hands piously folded on her lap, her eyes closed, her mouth tightly compressed.

Mrs. Dalby presided over the teapot. Very pale and worn looked the poor lady. It was singular that she should have found such comfort in the society of the gossiping Mrs. Wilcox, whom her beautiful daughter had always despised and disliked. But so it was.

"Depend upon it, dear madam," said Mrs. Wilcox, "you will see Diana again one of these days. It is ridiculous to associate her disappearance with any tragic event. Diana is with her lover. Let us hope he has become her husband by this time. The jewels are a sufficient fortune for them to subsist upon not only with comfort but in elegance. They

are probably residing abroad. But in the course of a few months Diana will begin to think of her own private personal property, the two hundred a year which is settled upon herself. She will write or she will come for it, then the mystery will be solved and your heart will be set at rest."

"Heaven grant it," sobbed Mrs. Dalby, "Heaven grant it, my dear friend!"

"There is no occasion," cried Mrs. Wilcox, "for so much despair. Did not a young girl disappear during last winter in leaving this very house, and have not news come lately that she is filling a situation as companion to Miss Woodville, of Stoneleigh Priory?"

"That is quite different," cried Mrs. Dalby, and her sobs redoubled, "that girl was sent away by her father. It is well known now in the town. He sold her, I believe, to that extraordinary and eccentric Lady Vengea Tempestoloud. She has escaped from the clutches of that woman and now she fills an honourable position. But my Diana, my Diana!"

Here the mother uttered a cry of despair and wrung her hands.

Mrs. Wilcox improved her opportunity by passing her cup for more tea, and then she helped herself to three large tablespoonsful of the strawberries. She poured cream over these and sweetened them with sugar to her liking, then she began to eat, and commenced another string of platitudes.

"Diana was too much indulged," said Mrs. Wilcox. "I never had any children of my own," here the widow wiped her eyes, "but if I had I feel convinced I should never have erred on the side of false indulgence. It is a cruelty."

"If I could only be sure," cried Mrs. Dalby, "that my child was alive—alive, no matter if she were disgraced, wicked, nay, steeped in shame to the very lips. Anything, anything, so that I might hope to behold my child again, hear her voice, take her hand in mine, and look into her eyes pronounce her pardon. But, oh, I have a cruel conviction that she is dead and gone, dead and gone! You know the detective positively states that her whole anxiety was to recover the lost jewels. That dreadful woman who robbed her in the barn must have murdered her afterwards. I feel convinced of it."

Mrs. Wilcox broke into a short, strange laugh. "What an idea," she said. "Dearest madam, you allow your anxiety to carry you away. As if the woman could kill her. Poor Diana would be quite as likely to kill the woman, that is if they entered into any struggle. But where could the woman find her? No, no, Diana must have left the house with her own free will—believe me she must."

"But who can say anything?" cried Mrs. Dalby, "about the man she is supposed to have eloped with. What is his name? Where did he come from? Has anybody been able to tell us anything definite about him? No, Mrs. Wilcox, no! All that must have been a report got up by the enemies of my child, those who were envious of her beauty, her talent, her grace, her undaunted spirit. I wonder you cannot see it in the light in which I do. And now while we are upon the subject, I wish you would tell me, Mrs. Wilcox, who it was that informed you, several weeks ago, that my dear Diana had gone away with a pawnbroker's assistant of very low habits. I heard you say it, and it never struck me to ask you for the name of your author, but now I will do so. Doctor Dalby has often urged this upon me."

Mrs. Wilcox had been stirring her tea furiously for the last minute and a half. Her yellow face looked ghastly pale. She smiled though all the time, a determined smile.

Still looking into her cup, still stirring her tea, she said, slowly and emphatically:

"I heard it from so many quarters that I could not tell you; it would be unfair to mention one person more than another."

"It is unfair to me," cried Mrs. Dalby, vehemently, "to repeat this terrible tale and not to give me a chance of vindicating my child's character."

"I am afraid," said Mrs. Wilcox, "that through trouble, my dear madam, your usually well-balanced mind has partially lost its equilibrium, and that you do not weigh things as you used to do; but I submit, for such is the duty of a Christian—for my friend's sake I would submit to anything, and for your sake, dearest of friends, would I cheerfully go to the stake. Therefore, reproach me as you will, I am ever your faithful and humble servant."

In consequence of this pretty speech poor Mrs. Dalby was completely humiliated.

"I beg your pardon," she cried, "yes, you are true—my troubles have completely unhinged my mind, and have made me unjust towards my best friend."

After this the two ladies embraced. Mrs. Wilcox ate more strawberries and cream, drank more tea, and helped herself to another slice of rich seed cake. Then the tea things were cleared away, Mrs. Wilcox tied on her hat, and sallied forth through the

French window on to the lawn. Mrs. Dalby accompanied her.

"I will not detain you any longer, dear madam," said Mrs. Wilcox, "because I know the doctor will be coming home presently to dinner. An humble personage like myself has always numerous duties to perform. I have made so excellent a meal myself, that I shall require nothing more until to-morrow morning. Abstemiousness and economy are my rules. When I leave here I have two or three poor sick people to visit, to whom I shall give the benefit of my advice and a trifle besides, a mite from a widow's purse." Here Mrs. Wilcox drew out her handkerchief once more, and wiped her eyes. "But for the present would you permit me to walk round your delightful garden, and to gather a sweet fresh nosegay, wherewith to brighten my humble home?"

"Take all that you like, dear friend," cried Mrs. Dalby, embracing her.

Then the ladies separated, and Mrs. Wilcox sauntered down the doctor's pleasant garden.

There was a wide lawn planted with fruit trees, and this was separated by a tall hedge of roses from another garden, where pleasant little alleys and paths wound in and out among beds beautifully arranged and planted with vegetables—tall scarlet runners, peas, asparagus, glass houses for cucumbers and marrows, and ever and anon, a large apple, pear, or plum tree spread out its fruitful boughs. This garden again was separated from another by a luxuriant fence of lilac and laburnum.

Passing under the blooming archway formed by these trees, Mrs. Wilcox found her way to the flower garden. This was always carefully attended to, and roses, lilies, geraniums, all the favourite children of June, blossomed here luxuriantly. Mrs. Wilcox began to gather flowers hastily, one had almost said greedily. A very large bouquet was her object. She had a theory that to be seen carrying flowers was often taken as a type of innocence and a wholesome love of nature.

She had a little pocket-knife, this she opened, and she began to cut away roses without mercy.

There was a large tree covered with yellow roses, which excited her especial cupidity, and for this she made straight.

It was a tall tree, quite a bush, and standing next to a large laurustinus formed a screen even for a tall man.

She was somewhat startled then, when hearing a footstep, she turned her head and encountered the handsome face of Paul Clement.

The setting sun shone full upon the young man, enveloping him in a halo of glory.

He was very pale, and his large gray eyes seemed to blaze like fire-coals, yet he smiled upon Mrs. Wilcox the blandest of smiles. He removed his hat from his head with the greatest politeness, and he said, gently:

"You are very fond of roses, Mrs. Wilcox."

"I love flowers," cried the pious dame, with a sigh, and she shook her head. "I admire nature in all her moods, and the beauty and freshness of flowers fill me with a delight which tunes my heart to thankfulness."

"Yours is a happy frame of mind, madam," said the young surgeon.

He was still smiling, and his pale face seemed to grow whiter by contrast with the red of the sunset.

"Yes," returned Mrs. Wilcox, and she began to cut away at the yellow roses. "Mine is a happy frame of mind, I am happy to say. My sphere is humble, but I trust it is a useful one. My pleasures are few and simple, but I enjoy them thoroughly. I strive to be a friend to my fellow creatures, and my life flows along peacefully, pleasantly—"

"Let us add piously, madam," cried Paul, "three p's. I am rather given to aliteration—pious, pleasant, and pious, Mrs. Wilcox, thus we ought to designate the most shining light in our little town."

And again Paul Clement removed his hat.

Mrs. Wilcox simpered and giggled.

"You are too complimentary, Mr. Clement," she said.

"Not at all," he answered. "Only see what a comfort you are in this household. You never enter it but to bring the healing balm of Gilead, which you pour, as it were, into the wounded hearts of the sorrowing parents of Diana Dalby."

Mrs. Wilcox shook her head several times, and closed her eyes very tightly.

"I strive to do my best," she said, "my very best. I think, Mr. Clement, if you will excuse my plain speaking, there is in your case, 'a young man's fancy lightly turned to thoughts of love,' as Mr. Tennyson so beautifully expressed it. It was a pity for Diana, though very pretty was very trifling, light-hearted, light-headed, giddy, vain, unstable."

Your genius was worthy of finding a more congenial helpmate. There is no doubt—here she lowered her voice—"but poor Miss Dalby has disgraced herself one way or the other, either by a low match or a wicked intrigue. I do not think that even the desire of claiming the fortune which has been entailed

on herself will induce her again to face the townspeople or her parents."

Paul Clement looked at her fixedly.

"Then it is your firm conviction, Mrs. Wilcox, that Diana will not return."

"It is my firm conviction," echoed Mrs. Wilcox.

"That she will never return at all?" demanded Paul Clement.

"Never at all," continued Mrs. Wilcox, cutting off a large yellow rose.

"One would almost think, madam," observed the young man, "Miss Dalby had let you into some of her secrets."

Mrs. Wilcox laughed a short little nervous laugh.

"Oh, no, no," she said. "I was never favoured with Miss Dalby's confidence."

"It is a little strange then that you should be so well acquainted with her intentions. But I suppose that is to be attributed to the wonderful penetration with which you are gifted."

"I am wonderfully gifted with penetration," replied Mrs. Wilcox. "I always read Diana as plainly as a printed page. A girl unworthy of her admirable parents."

Again Mrs. Wilcox shook her head, and again she closed her eyes.

Paul Clement bit his lip, and a gleam shot out of his eyes which spiritually, at least, was charged with wrath sufficient to have felled Mrs. Wilcox to the earth.

But she was smirking down upon her yellow roses, and she did not notice the intense rage which agitated the features of the young surgeon.

By the time she looked at him again he had regained command over his countenance, and was smiling at the pious lady as politely as ever.

"I must not linger any longer here among the flowers," he said, "even though to the temptation offered by their fragrance is added that of listening to your delightful converse. I must go in and study for the next three hours."

Clement bowed.

Mrs. Wilcox simpered, and offered him her hand. In lieu of taking it, the young man bowed again, and then turned off towards the house.

Mrs. Wilcox watched his retreating form.

"He does not like me," she said to herself.

"Now, I wonder why? I have always been very kind to him. I suppose it is because I have never praised that pert, bold—"

She shuddered, and could not finish the sentence. An evil scowl contracted her brow.

"It could not be helped," she said; "it had to be done."

And then grasping her enormous bouquet of flowers Mrs. Wilcox wended her way from the doctor's garden into the street, and then took the road to her own house.

Arrived there she went to her room, locked the door, turned a suspicious glance towards the windows of the opposite houses, and then pulled down the blind of her own.

After that she drew a bunch of keys from her pocket, unfastened the oaken chest, and drew out the box which contained another box, which in its turn, contained the jewels.

Having unlocked these boxes she drew forth the precious gems which had been the cause of so much misery.

There they were. The heavy necklace and earrings, the massive bracelets, gorgeous brooch and elegant eases, all of the purest gold, and set with the largest rubies surrounded by brilliants of the purest water.

Never did the eye rest on more exquisite jewels.

Mrs. Wilcox turned them over fondly in her hands.

"It is time that I disposed of them," she said, "they have lain here six weeks. Yes, I will go up to London by the night train. I will dispose of these ornaments to-morrow. And then I will return to Northwick St. John's the day after. I shall state on my return that I was suddenly summoned to the death-bed of a friend, who has left me some property."

Mrs. Wilcox then placed the jewels in a bag of wash leather which she forthwith sewed into her stays.

She had that day given her little servant two days' holiday. Consequently she feared no spy upon her actions.

She uncorked a bottle of brandy, mixed some with water, and made a supper of cold beef and bread and butter. She then packed up a very small parcel, which she placed in a capacious pocket of her dress.

Afterwards she put on her bonnet, drew down her veil, wrapped herself in a black shawl, and sallied forth from her house, which she looked up carefully, securing the key about her person.

Then she took her way to the station. Was she watched? Did eager footsteps follow in her track?

Seated in a large compartment of a third-class

carriage, crowded by country folks journeying southwards, were two prying eyes fixed upon her, of which she was unconscious. And in the cold gray light of the morning, when having taken her place in an omnibus, she was set down near the doorway of an old City inn, who was it that followed her into the passage, and peeped at her stealthily round a doorway, while she was bargaining with the landlady for her breakfast?

It was a man with dark bushy whiskers, beard and moustache. A man with iron gray hair, a man wrapped in a dirty brown overcoat.

How was it then that the gray flashing eyes with which he followed her every movement were the eyes of the youthful, fair-haired Paul Clement?

(To be continued.)

HOW TO FIND OUT WHOM ANY GIVEN PERSON WILL MARRY.

It don't require an astrologer, a medium, or a gipsy with a dirty pack of cards. It is very simple—lies in a nutshell, and can be expressed in a few words. They are these: The last person you would naturally think of.

If a girl expresses her fondness for majestic men with large whiskers, make up your mind that she will marry a very small man with none. If she declares that "mind" is all she looks for, expect to see her stand before the altar with a pretty fellow who has just sense enough to tie a smart bow. If, on the contrary, she declares that she must have a handsome husband, look about you for the plainest person in her circle of acquaintance, and declare "that is the man," for it will be.

Men are almost as bad. The gentleman who desires a wife with a mind and a mission, marries a lisping baby who screams at the sight of a mouse, and hides her face when she hears a sudden knock at the door. And the gentleman who dreads anything like strong-mindedness, exults in the fact that his wife is exactly everything he declared he detested.

If a girl says to one: "Marry him? I'd rather die," look upon the affair as settled, and expect cards to the wedding of those two people.

If a man remarks of a lady: "Not my style at all!" await patiently the appearance of his name in the matrimonial column in connection with that very lady's.

And if any two people declare themselves "friends and nothing more," you may know what will come next.

There is no hypocrisy in all this, and such matches are invariably the happiest. People do not know themselves, and make great mistakes about their own intentions. Love is terribly perplexing when he first begins to upset one's theories, and when his arrow first pierces the heart there is such a fluttering there that it is hard to guess the cause. Besides, man proposes and Heaven disposes, and it is the "I don't know what" with which people fall in love, and not those peculiarities which could be given in a passport.

M. K. D.

We believe there is no foundation for the statement which has appeared both in English and French journals, to the effect that the Queen intends visiting St. Petersburg in the autumn.

An Act of Parliament has just been issued to alter the shooting season for grouse and other game birds in Ireland. The season, by the statute of the 37th Geo. III., commenced on the 20th of August, and is now altered to the 12th of August.

It is understood that on the arrival of Chumash and Susi, the attendants of Dr. Livingstone, in England, they will be examined before the Council of the Royal Geographical Society, and afterwards invited to dictate an account of the travels of the great missionary to some gentlemen, who will read a paper on the subject to the members of the society.

PRESERVING WOODEN TAPS FOR CASKS.—The articles should be plunged in paraffin heated to about 248 degrees Fah. until no air bubbles rise to the surface of the melted material. They are then allowed to cool, and the paraffin is removed from the surface, when nearly congealed, by thorough rubbing. Taps thus treated, it is said, will never split or become impregnated with the liquid, and may be used in casks containing alcoholic liquors.

The accouchement of the Princess Louis of Hesse Darmstadt increased the number of Her Majesty's grandchildren to twenty-five. The Princess Imperial of Prussia has had four sons and four daughters (one son has died); the Princess Louis of Hesse Darmstadt, two sons and five daughters (one son has died); the Princess Christian, two sons and two daughters; and the Prince of Wales, three sons and three daughters (one son has died).

The electors of Buckinghamshire have subscribed 1,159l. 15s. to defray the election expenses incurred by the Prime Minister in consequence of the opposition of Mr. Tilley. That sum has been handed over to the agent of the right hon. gentleman. Mr.

Disraeli states that he might have hesitated to accept this proof of confidence in him, but he adds, "When I observe how spontaneously and how universally it has arisen, I can only look upon it as the act of a generous and a high-spirited constituency, which, though I may not merit it, it would be presumption to decline."

ETIQUETTE TOWARDS THE POOR.

A CIRCLE of richly-dressed young people were awaiting rather impatiently a delayed boat. A shabbily-dressed old man, who was standing back in the cold, volunteered some civil remark in a pleasant tone, but his only reply was a cold stare and an occasional sneer at his rags from one and another of the group. Oh, how those glances pierced through the worn coat to the very depths of the old man's heart! More cutting than the fiercest blasts of the north wind are the shafts of ridicule. The old man quickly drew back, with a hopeless, dejected air, shutting back the misery in his own bosom which this thoughtless, unfeeling conduct had occasioned.

A youth, sitting apart from the rest, had read, with a glance of his honest eye, the whole story. He saw the pain which was traced on the furrowed brow, an answering throb was awakened in his own bosom. Drawing nearer, he gave him a suitable and respectful answer to his remark and drew him into a little farther conversation.

It was delightful to see the quick and glad surprise which lighted the old man's eye at this attention. The unkindness of the moment before was forgotten, so were his age and infirmities, and he seemed to feel that he was not so wholly cut off from the sympathies of the world as he had just now seemed.

J. E. Mc. C.

A BAFFLING PROBLEM.

ONE cold winter evening, a knot of village worthies were convened in the parlour of a country inn, warming their fingers and telling stories and cracking jokes. The schoolmaster, the blacksmith and the barber, the constable, butcher and grocer, were all there.

After they had drunk ale and smoked to their hearts' content, and when all the current topics of the day had been exhausted, the schoolmaster proposed a new game to relieve the monotony of the evening. Each one was to propound a puzzle to his neighbour, and whoever should ask a question he himself could not solve should pay the reckoning for the entire company.

The idea took at once, and the schoolmaster, "by virtue of his office," called on Dick D., whom most persons thought an idiot, and a few a knave, to put the first question.

"Well, neighbours," said Dick, drawing out his words, and looking ineffably dull and stupid, "you have seen where squirrels dig their holes, haven't you? Can any of you tell me the reason why they never throw out any dirt?"

This was a "poser," and even the "master" had to "give it up."

It now devolved on Dick to explain.

"The reason is," said Dick, "that they begin at the bottom of the hole!"

"Stop! stop!" cried the schoolmaster, startled out of all prudence by so monstrous an assertion, "pray, how does the squirrel get there?"

"Ah, master," replied the cunning one, "that's a question of your own asking!"

The result had not been anticipated. The "schoolmaster was abroad" at that particular juncture.

THE French papers announce that a great chess combat is to take place between the celebrated French and English players by telegraph, for a prize of 4,000l.

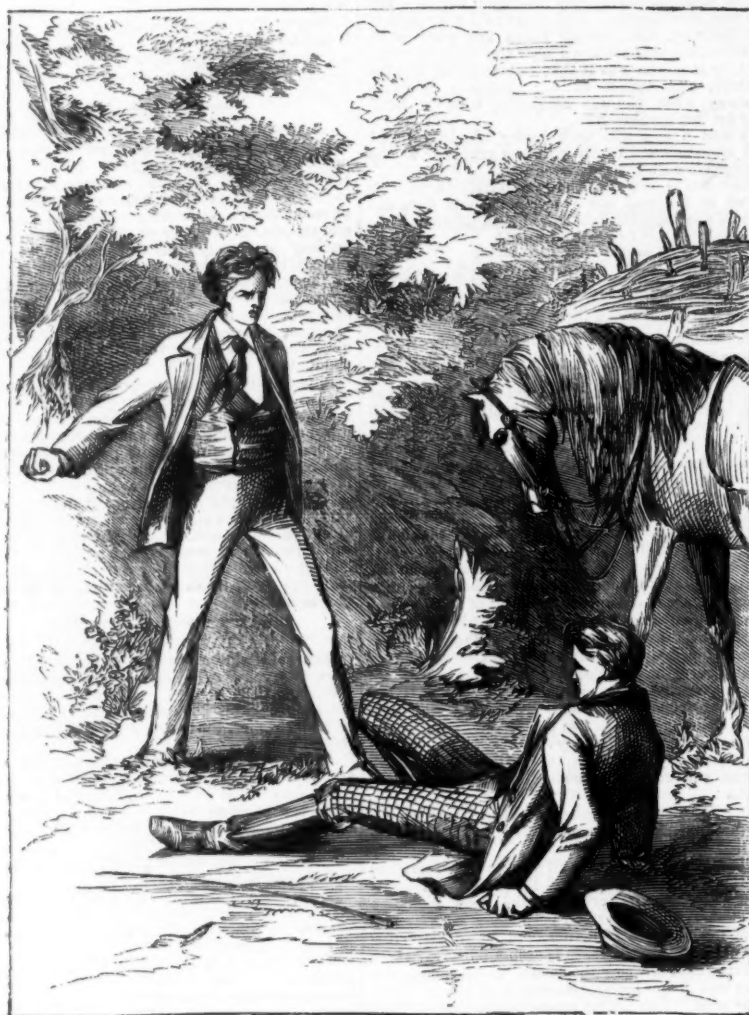
A SALUTARY reform is being instituted in the sculpture department of the Louvre—a tablet stating the subject, the sculptor and the date is to be placed on the pedestal of each statue.

BARON ROTHSCHILD is now building a splendid mansion in the Avenue de Marigny, Champs Elysees, at Paris, which is to cost six millions of francs. It will be the most sumptuous residence in Paris.

THE last new thing in linendraper's shops in Paris in a billiard-room for husbands and brothers to beguile the time while their fair companions are making their purchases. A good lunch and glass of wine are also provided gratis.

THE Emperor of China has ordered a collection to be made of Chinese poetry from the earliest times downwards. This collection will be published in 200 volumes. It is also stated that the Emperor has in his possession a library numbering above 400,000 volumes.

A CURIOUS law point has arisen in New York. A man, his wife and daughter all perished in a fire recently, and now, before the property of the deceased can be divided according to the law of entail, it is necessary to decide whether the wife or daughter died first.



[BLOW FOR BLOW.]

THE RIVALS.

THEY stood by the gate at the foot of the lane, where the daisies lifted their heads from among the green grass, she with one white arm resting upon the upper bar, and her eyes downcast, and he nervously striking his boot with his riding-whip. Both were alike indifferent to the beauties of the landscape or the glories of the sunset.

"So you think you can't like me, do you, Nettie?" said Will Hazleton, a tinge of impatience in his tone.

"Oh, I do like you, as a friend," was the quiet answer.

He switched his boot unmercifully for a minute, and then drawing a long breath, spoke again.

"I don't mean that, and you know it as well as you know that I love you, and yet you evade my words, and annoy me as much as you can."

"I have told you repeatedly that it is useless for you and me to talk about love," she replied, pushing her dark tresses from her shoulders.

"And that means—"

"Yes, that is exactly what it means," she interposed, laughing. "Don't make me say it over again—I'm tired of it."

"And of me, too, perhaps," he interrupted, petulantly.

"Yes, when you talk so sillily and look so mournful," she rejoined, with a brilliant smile. "Come, now, cast away your dolefulness; remember that I shall respect you as a friend, and—your whip is almost worn out, isn't it?"

And she glanced downward in mock solicitude, her eyes sparkling with mischief.

He flung the whip a dozen yards from him, and folded his arms.

"Are you satisfied now?"

"You are losing your temper. I think I'll return to the house," she said, with gentle reproof.

He put out one hand to detain her, and gazed upon her pleadingly.

"Is it any wonder?" he exclaimed, passionately. "I can't cry like a woman, and my feelings must have some vent. But you don't realize it—you seem to think that I can take your denial as easily as you can give it; that because you won't have me my love must expire at once. Good Heaven, Nettie, can't you give me credit for any heart at all?"

"I can, and I do. I am sorry if I have hurt your feelings, but pray tell me how it would benefit either of us if I should pull my face down and sigh, and wish that I could return your regard, when I know that it is simply impossible? It would only make you feel worse, and cause me to appear ridiculous."

"Then sympathy is ridiculous, is it? I notice that you have a great deal to give to Martin Clement—"

"Which I have a perfect right to do."

"Oh! Ah! of course! and you love him too, I suppose?" he continued, anger gleaming in his eyes.

"I do."

Hazleton's face grew very white; he bit his lip, and clenched his hands.

"I admire your taste," he said, sneeringly. "Here, for three years, I have loved you—I, who could give you the best home in the village, and yet you cast me for a boor—"

"He is as good as you are, and better too in disposition!" replied Nettie, spiritedly. "Had he your money he would make a better appearance with it than you do, and would never boast of it. Neither would he lower himself by flinging small spite in a girl's face because she could not love him. I'd advise you, Will, guard as you are, to study the good points of Martin's character, and try to imitate them."

And with a toss of her jetty ringlets she bade him a haughty "Good-night," and walked up the lane.

Hazleton gazed after her in mingled grief, jealousy, mortification and rage; then turning, he mounted his horse, and rode slowly down the road.

He had not proceeded three rods ere he met Martin Clement, and the instant he beheld him a light of mingled hate and exultation flashed into his eyes.

"How do you do, Mr. Hazleton?" said Martin, pleasantly, as he leaped over the wall.

"I don't wish you to speak to me at all," replied Will, scornfully.

Martin paused; an expression of wonder flew to his features; then, as he noted the speaker's curling lip, his face reddened, but he controlled himself, and said nothing.

"And another thing, fellow. I want you to pay less attention to Nettie Morris. She requested me to give you this message."

"Nettie is capable of expressing her wishes herself, Mr. Hazleton," answered Martin, steadily.

"Do you mean to insinuate that I speak falsely?" Hazelton exclaimed, angrily.

Martin conquered the passion that flamed up in his breast, though it required a superhuman effort, for the rich man's overbearing insolence was most aggravating.

"It is plain that you wish to quarrel with me," he said, in a tremulous voice. "I think we had better separate."

"And I think you are a low, mean, contemptible coward!" cried Hazelton, drawing his whip, and giving Martin a cut across the shoulders.

Human nature could endure no more. Springing into the air, Martin struck Hazelton a sharp blow in the face. Quick as a flash, the latter leaped to the ground.

"I'll send you home with a broken head!" ejaculated Will, making a furious pass at his opponent's brow.

But the latter was not so ignorant of the art of self-defence as the wealthy young gentleman imagined, and the next thing he knew was that he was lying on the grass, with one eye considerably discoloured.

"You forced me to do it," said Martin, regretfully. "I had no desire to fight with you, and if you are wise, you will let this drop where it is; I am satisfied."

"I'm not dead yet, you calf! I'll not rest until I've pounded your conceit out of you, if it takes a month!" answered Hazelton, as he arose, and threw off his coat.

Once more they met, and several minutes were occupied in sparring; then Hazelton was sent to the earth again, with a swelling under his other eye.

Cursing his adversary, he jumped up again and renewed the conflict, but without any better success.

Work as he would he could not reach Martin, but the latter managed to hit him, and hard too, about every other blow.

"Will you stop now, or I shall punish you?" said Martin, growing impatient.

"Take that for an answer!" howled Will, at last succeeding in striking his antagonist a heavy blow under one ear.

Martin went down, but was up again in a second, resolved to exercise no leniency.

Much encouraged, Hazelton rained in his strokes thick and fast, and managed to hit his opponent three or four times about the shoulders, but this was the last, for Martin caught Will's head under his arm an instant later, and pounded him until he cried most lustily for quarter.

But he had waited too long; he had awakened "the wrath of the patient man," and it must have its vent.

It was useless now for Hazelton to plead; the hand that would gladly have withdrawn a few moments before was now pelting him about the head and face remorselessly.

"Murder! Murder! Help!" at last yelled Hazelton, in despair.

"Oh, that is it, is it? Who is the coward now? I've a mind to whip you within an inch of your life!"

"Stop! Help! Murder!" shrieked the defeated boaster.

"There, go home, you poltroon!" said Martin, pushing him away contemptuously.

"I'll have my revenge for this. I'll never lose sight of you if you go to the antipodes!" muttered Hazelton, passing his hand over his swelling face, and swearing with mortification. "You've defeated me now, but wait—wait—wait, you low-bred cur!"

Martin shrugged his shoulders disdainfully, and turning, walked rapidly toward the home of Nettie Morris. At the same instant a vehicle dashed up

to the spot he had just left, and two men alighted from it.

"By George, sir, you're nearly done for," said one.

"Where is the second?"

"Up the lane," answered Will, feebly.

Both started in pursuit. Martin heard steps in his rear, and quickened his pace, determined to have a word with Nettie at all events, for he suspected that he was about to be arrested. He approached the house from the rear, and, as good luck would have it, Nettie came to the door just as he reached it. Noting his pale face and agitated manner, she felt that something unusual had occurred, and said, anxiously:

"Oh, Martin! what is it? Why have you run so?"

"I've thrashed Hazelton—he forced me to do it, and men are in pursuit—officers, I think. I fled for your sake, I wanted you to know the truth."

"I should never have doubted you! Now turn and face them, for my sake!" replied the brave girl, clasping her hands and standing erect and fearless by his side.

A minute later two men came tearing up to the spot, and, as Martin had suspected, they were constables.

One valiantly placed himself behind the young man, while the other, with a pompous air, spread out his arms before him and made the startling announcement:

"Now, sir, you perceive that you are surrounded—it will be useless for you to fight or run! You are guilty of a grave offence. Come with us!"

"I am ready, gentlemen," replied Martin, composedly. "You might have saved your speech—I had no intention of flight or resistance."

"I will walk down to the road with you, Martin, and when papa comes home he will bail you," said Nettie, smiling through her tears.

The young man bestowed a grateful glance upon her, and they moved on.

Reaching the scene of the recent conflict, they found Hazelton sitting on the grass, looking woebegone in more respects than one.

He bowed his head as he saw Nettie, and began his favourite pastime of switching his boot with his whip.

The officers marched Martin to the vehicle and were about to assist him into it, when Hazelton said, crossly:

"See here, who told you to meddle? Have I made any complaint against Martin Clement?"

The officers paused and stared at each other very sheepishly.

"No," drawled one at length.

"Then what business have you to arrest him? He didn't assault you, did he?"

"But the effect on the community—the violation of the law."

"Oh, hang the community! Let him go, I tell you!" snarled Hazelton.

The men obeyed reluctantly.

Martin was perplexed; he knew not whether to ascribe this unexpected and singular action of Hazelton to magnanimity or a subtle policy; so he stood reflecting, with his eyes downcast.

Nettie, looking only at the act itself, and not thinking of the motive, was enthusiastic over Hazelton's manliness.

"You are really good, Will!" she exclaimed, gratefully. "Your noble nature has shown itself as I thought it would. You knew that Martin didn't mean to fight with you, and so you wouldn't complain of him—Isn't that it?"

"You may have it so if you like," he replied, with a faint smile, but a gleam of hate shot into his eyes. "That's modest! Come, Martin, give Will your hand, let us have peace," she continued, with gladness.

Martin approached, grasped Will's hand warmly, and Nettie looked on with thankfulness and gratification.

"To-morrow at this hour, darling, we shall be one."

Martin Clement uttered the words in a low voice, tremulous with joyful anticipation, and, lifting his hand, tenderly smoothed the clustering curls from Nettie's brow.

She blushed rosily, and her eyes drooped until the long lashes nearly swept her cheek.

"You are silent, dearest."

"Because I am so happy, Martin," she answered, softly.

"And no act of mine shall ever make you less so," he said, devotedly.

"I can believe you, for you have waited and worked for me; and it shall be my pleasure as well as my duty to work for you if need be, and sustain you in the trials of life. Oh, Martin! as long as we are patient and forbearing—as long as we are true to

ourselves and each other we shall have peace and contentment; and what can earth yield more than this?"

"Nothing, my darling; they who have this are indeed richly blessed."

At that moment one of the farm-hands came into the room, bearing a box in his arms.

"From Mr. Hazelton for Miss Morris," he said, as he placed it on a chair.

"I wonder what it is? Open it, Martin," said Nettie, eagerly.

"Will is getting very free with his presents," said Martin, cutting the string.

"Yes; he feels remorseful because he treated you so unkindly, and wants to make it up," answered Nettie, charitably.

"I hope so," was the doubtful rejoinder.

When the box was open Nettie threw up her hands in mingled surprise and delight, for there was a silver tea-service lined with gold, and marked "Nettie," in rich chasing.

"Oh, isn't it beautiful!" she exclaimed, breathlessly.

"Very. His repentance is too sincere, his kindness is too magnificent. I can't imagine his nature rising to such a sublime height of magnanimity. There is a motive underlying all this."

"You are unjust, dear, I'm afraid; but it shall be sent back if you wish."

"I'll think of it: we will decide before to-morrow," replied Martin.

To-morrow! Eternity is often comprised in that phrase.

That night at eight o'clock Martin started across the fields to carry some provisions to a poor family. He executed his mission, and on the way back stopped a moment at the house of an acquaintance.

Much to his surprise, he found Hazelton there, and of course greeted him warmly, though he would rather not have met him at all, considering what had occurred.

"Glad to see you, Clement. By Jove! your marriage comes off to-morrow, doesn't it? We must drink your health. Neighbour Jayne, bring out some of that old wine of yours; it's the real article, I can tell you!"

"Twenty-seven years old last July," said the old man, proudly, as he placed bottle and glasses on the table. "I made it myself, and I know what it is. Sit up, Mr. Clement; we don't get married but once in our youth, and it's a time for merry-making. Sit up and drink health!"

Martin could not refuse without appearing rude, so he drank one glass with them, and then tried to get away; but Hazelton would not hear of his going until he had drunk Nettie's health.

This generosity on the part of a rival was so unusual that Martin was bound by every law of decency to comply; and he did so with all possible grace. Then, after a few moments' conversation, he bade them good night, and started for home.

The air had grown sharper, and Martin walked very fast at first; but after a while his limbs refused their duty, his senses became clouded, and he staggered like a drunken man.

"That wine was drugged—I know it was!" he muttered, pressing his hands to his brow, and striving to control his faculties. "Where am I? There is Hazelton's barn—I wonder if I can get there?"

He stumbled on, and managed to reach the barn and crawl in upon the floor; then his senses deserted him.

Ten minutes later Will Hazelton came in with a dark lantern, placed a bottle containing a small quantity of gin in Martin's coat pocket, also some matches in his vest pocket, and then left him.

An hour later the neighbourhood was aroused with the dread cry, "Fire! Fire!" and all the men and boys rushed to Hazelton's barn, the left or west wing of which was in a bright blaze.

"There's a man in there!"

The words passed hurriedly from lip to lip, and yet no one offered to release the poor victim from his perilous position.

Every instant the flames drew nearer—the small quantity of water that could be brought to bear upon them only increased their fury—and the incendiary's doom seemed imminent.

At that moment Will Hazelton dashed in, dragged the man out into the air, and then started back with well-feigned horror as he beheld his features.

"It's Martin Clement! drunk, too!" said James Boles, one of the constables who had officiated on a former occasion. "Of course he set the barn afire—there was nobody else to do it!"

"Search his pockets," suggested one of the crowd.

It was done, and the half-empty gin-bottle and the matches furnished strong presumptive evidence against him.

"Poor Nettie! I pity her," said another. "She

thought there wasn't a better man on earth, and here he got drunk and set his friend's barn on fire—the best friend he had, too! for Will has borne with him like a Christian."

Just then a lithe feminine figure darted into the crowd.

"Where is Martin? have any of you seen him?" she asked, anxiously.

"Come away, Nettie, come away," said Will Hazelton, pleadingly.

"Why do you all stare so?" she cried, her bosom heaving convulsively. "Why should I come away? What is it? Heavens, is he dead?"

She dropped on her knees beside her lover's prostrate form, and smoothed his brow and rained passionate kisses upon his cheeks and lips, and begged him to speak to her; but all in vain.

"He ain't worthy of your thoughts, miss; he's drunk, and he set this barn on fire," said the erudite Mr. Boles.

Nettie turned upon him with flashing eyes.

"It's false! No earthly power can make me doubt him!"

Hazelton grew a shade paler.

Poor Nettie! From that hour her care and sorrow began, and lingered until it seemed her nature must sink under it. One month later Martin Clement was convicted of arson, and sentenced to four years' imprisonment, and Nettie went to the very door of his cell with him, and comforted him with her faith, and assured him, though her own heart was nearly breaking, that there was happiness in the future for them! And then she went home to take up her burden. Ah! those weary, weary days.

"He's dead, sir; his horse reared up and fell upon him!"

"Who? What do you mean?" interrupted Farmer Morris, starting up.

"Why, Will Hazelton, to be sure; he's right here, sir, at the foot of the lane; he said something to Tom, but I don't know what it was—they were his last words, sir, anyway!"

At that moment Tom, the ostler, came running into the house.

"Oh, sir, it was awful to see the poor fellow! but some good may come of it, perhaps. He told me to give you this key—it belongs to his desk; I asked him what for, but he couldn't say no more!"

This occurred one year after Martin's conviction.

When the desk was opened there was found a confession of the crime for which Martin was incarcerated, which of course brought his release at once, and, farther, there was a will, leaving Hazelton Hall to Nettie in her own right.

Thus Martin Clement's character was cleared before the world, and Nettie's constancy was the theme of universal admiration. G. W. S.

MR. GILKS, the wood engraver, recently delivered a lecture on "Albert Dürer, the Realist," at the Quebec Institute, Portman Square. There was an interesting exhibition of large old woodcuts and reproductions of Dürer's works, with chiaroscuro woodcuts of the Italian school. After an introduction showing the uses of great artists even in their failures, the lecturer touched upon the position of art anterior to Dürer's time, and showed how thought was mixed up with all the mechanical activity of the time; he alluded to the first paper mill and printing press, and laid great stress upon the civilizing results flowing therefrom.

PLANTS TO CURE HYDROPHOBIA.—A brief account of the medicinal properties contained in those plants recommended so strongly recently as a cure for hydrophobia may interest some of your readers. The "toad-flax" mentioned is a singular-looking but common yellow flower, called by children "butter and eggs," growing on hedges and on dry banks, and flowering from July to September. Very few animals ever touch it, in consequence of its intensely bitter taste, but it was at one time used in medicine in cases of hypochondria, and the Landgrave of Hesse is said to have bribed his physician, Dr. Wolph, to disclose the secret of some wonderful ointment with the leaves and flowers. It is cathartic and deobstruent. The right time to gather this plant is when it is in full bloom, about August, and it is called toad-flax because the mouth of the flower resembles the mouth of that reptile. The "setter-wort" mentioned is the bear's-foot, or "stinking hellebore," an evergreen perennial not at all common. It blooms in April and May, and is met with in chalky soils. It is a strong poison, but loses some of its properties by being kept. Drying will also deprive it of a portion of its virtues, and the patient who tries it as a remedy, or rather preventive, in hydrophobia, must be cautious in the use of it, otherwise he may die in strong convulsions of the cure before the disease has time to appear. In such a case it could certainly be termed "the perfect cure." Still, we must add that the dose named re-

cently could not produce such effects, fifteen grains being given to children as a vermifuge very frequently in rustic practice without injury; but there are cases on record of parents having poisoned their little ones by incautiously administering too much of this home-prepared worm-powder. The effects of an overdose are not unlike the convulsions produced by hydrophobia. There are a sense of strangulation, great anxiety, and other symptoms of a like nature. The bractre is more powerful than the proper leaves, and it is classed among the narcotic-acrid poisons. The provincial name setter-wort is said to be derived from seton-wort, the root being often used by farriers as a seton in veterinary practice. The primrose, like its cousin the cowslip, is a narcotic narcine, and was formerly considered efficacious in paralytic affections. The liver-wort (*Peltidia canina*) is famed as Dr. Mead's celebrated remedy for hydrophobia. It is a lichen, and known to herbalists as the ground liver-wort.—J. L. S.

WHY PEOPLE DO NOT MARRY BETTER.

You have seen a beautiful girl, beautiful in person and in spirit, graceful in form and feature, and of a lovely disposition, married to a man of common mould. Who cannot recall many such instances? Then, again, you see strong, intellectual men—men every way superior—so grievously mismatched! It has often been remarked that if matches are made in heaven they must have got dreadfully shaken up and misplaced on their way down.

Now, it is very natural, not only that people should, in the first place, all want to marry well themselves, but also, in the second place, that their own friends should be particularly well married. At the same time, when we come to take a broad, philosophical, true view of the matter, what do we find our conclusion to be on the subject?

It is very simple, and it is this:

Marriages, on the whole, cannot average above a certain medium quality. In other words, marriages, in the general, must be precisely on a level with the general character of the persons of whom the community is made up. And, as a comprehensive proposition, the whole problem of marriage is reduced to this question:

Is it better for such people to marry each other, or to live single?

It is inevitable that as marriage is general, there must be thousands of instances in which parents will be disappointed at the matches which their children make. Love is mysterious, and it leads the feet of boys and girls in directions where their fathers and mothers would fain not have them go. They will not select the companions for life which others would select for them. The most that can be done to render marriages happier is to contribute what one can to the improvement of the whole community. You cannot foresee who may become your son-in-law or your daughter-in-law—perhaps the very last person on earth you would expect.

Whatever parents do, therefore, for the physical, intellectual and moral culture of the whole people, tends to increase the chances that their own sons and daughters will marry well.—H. C.

PHILOSOPHY OF COOKERY.—Cookery is an art belonging to woman's department of knowledge; its importance can hardly be over-estimated, because it acts directly on human health, comfort and improvement. One of the first duties of woman in domestic life is to understand the quality of provisions and the preparation of wholesome food. The powers of the mind as well as those of the body are greatly dependent on what we eat and drink. The stomach must be in health, or the brain cannot act with its utmost vigour and clearness, nor can there be strength of muscle to perform the purposes of the will. To preserve the full nourishment of meats and other articles of food, in dressing and cooking, is an art which requires a large amount of scientific knowledge added to long experience and observation. Without the knowledge derived from this two-fold source a great part of food is wasted and health injured. It is an established principle in physiology that man is omnivorous—that is, constituted to eat almost every kind of food containing nourishment. He can eat and digest them in a raw state; but his health is promoted by their being cooked, that is, softened by the action of fire and water.

OLD TERMS OF FOWLING.—The old fowlers and masters of woodcraft would have been exceedingly scornful over our loose way of using such words as "flock" or "covey" in speaking of birds. According to a student of such matters, who has been at the pains to collect some of the technical terms of fowling, it is proper to speak of a siege of herons and bitterns; a herd of swans, drakes, or curlews; a d'pping of sheldrakes, a spring of teal, a covert of coots, a gaggle (or cackle?) of geese, a badelynge of

ducks, a sord or suite of mallards, a muster of peacocks, a rye of pheasant, a bavy of quails, a congregation of plovers, a walk of snipe, a fall of woodcocks, a brood of hens, a building of rooks, a murmuration of starlings, an exaltation of larks, a flight of swallows, a host of sparrows, a watch of nightingales, and a charm of goldfinches. It would be rather troublesome to remember and apply such a vocabulary, but most of the terms are so poetically and quaintly appropriate to the various classes of birds that their entire loss from the language is to be regretted. In poetry, at all events, many of the words would be well worth restoring and retaining.

FACETIÆ.

A CERTAIN man has a watch which he says has gained enough to pay for itself in six months.

"How greedy you are," said one little girl to another, who had taken the best apple in the dish. "I was going to take that."

LAW is like a sieve; you may see through it, but you must be considerably reduced before you can get through it.

A MAN with a scolding wife, on being asked what he did for a living, replied that he kept a hot-house.

DEAR AT THE PRICE.—Last year the police for co paid 1,000*l.* for "a legal adviser." What queer "advice" he must have given them!—*Hornet.*

It is not generally known that "the Derby Dog" appeared with a muzzle on this year, by special order of Colonel Henderson.—*Judy.*

"CONFOUND that Tree of Knowledge," exclaimed a young student, who was struggling to climb some of the rudimental "branches;" "why hadn't Adam an axe?"

AN Irishman, the other day, bid a most extraordinary price for an alarm clock, and as a reason, he said, "That as he loved to rise early, he had now only to pull the string and wake himself."

A GENIUS has invented a spyglass of wonderful power. He said he looked through it at a third cousin, and it brought him relatively nearer than any of his brothers.

SEVERAL pictures at the Royal Academy, rejected when they belonged to connoisseurs, are admitted this year when they belong to dealers. This requires investigation.—*Hornet.*

It has been asserted that the present is the most popular Derby that has ever been. This is a mistake. The most popular Derby "as ever was" is at the head of the foreign office.—*Judy.*

THE gentleman who was asked whether he was going down this year, said he had been going down for the last five years, and would rather like a lift.—*Judy.*

A FISHING SCENE.

Pious Gentleman: "My boy! my boy! you do very wrong to fish on a Sunday."

Boy: "It can't be no harm, sir, I arn't catch'd nothing."

DE VINO VERITAS.—There is advertised a wine under the denomination of "May fair Sherry." Is not this too candid? All sherry is supposed, by the public, if not the publican, to come from Spain.—*Punch.*

A LANTERN-JAWED Vermonter got aboard a steamer for the first time, and fell through the hatch-way into the hold, when, being unhurt, he was heard to express his surprise: "Well, if the darned thing ain't holler!"

"PROFESSOR," said a student in pursuit of knowledge concerning animals, "why does a cat, while eating, turn her head first one way and then another?" "For the reason," replied the professor, "that she cannot turn it both ways at once."

SHELL OUT.—A scientific paper devotes some space to a description of the mode of making imitation tortoise-shell. Surely the cheapest and best substitute for the real article would be the shell of a well-known mock turtle.—*Fan.*

A HOLIDAY'S FINISH.

Landlady (to potman): "Joe, put this lot out."

Potman: "He says he has fourpence."

Landlady: "Then don't be so rough. Ask the gentleman what he'll have."—*Fun.*

ALLO!

A provincial journal says: The Alooa coopers are only working half-time, and the brewers are brewing three times a week instead of daily. In other words the coopers in question cannot afford their usual Allowance of beer.—*Fan.*

THE Highlanders, from habit, invariably mix their toddy twice as strong as the Lowlanders are accustomed to do. I was once sitting on the box of the Aberdeen and Banff coach, by the side of Charley, a well-known and respected dragsman, one very cold morning, when we stopped at an inn to change horses, and Charley informed me we could get a

"drap o' real gude whiskey there," wishing to know whether I would prefer it "Heeland or Lowland fashion; for ye ken," continued the smiling Jehu, "the Heelandor says, a glass o' whiskey and a glass o' water mak's very gude Lowland toddy; but a glass o' whiskey and a glass o' whiskey dings a' for making it real tartan toddy."—*I. A.*

REGGACTLY SO!

Customer: "Them eggs in the window good?"

Trader: "Don't know, ain't been inside 'em!"

Customer: "Ah, thought you didn't look like a chicken! Good bye."—*Fun.*

BLOW IT!—It is asserted that a trumpeter of the 20th Hussars has committed suicide by blowing out his brains with a carbine loaded with blank cartridge. We should have thought he might as easily have blown them out with his trumpet.—*Fun.*

THICK AND THIN.

Showman (to somewhat attenuated individuals): "All alive, all alive, the greatest curiosity of the hage. Step inside, gents, just in yer line; come along, sir. 'Ere, 'ang it, there ain't much of yer; I'll pass the two on yer in half price."—*Fun.*

A LOWER DEPTH.

Gallant Officer (to volunteers in a heavy marsh): "Form four deep—confound it all! four deep, there, I say!"

Voices from the ranks: "All right; we're too deep here already."—*Fun.*

JONES thinks that he would make a good correspondent, because he says he always writes two capital letters every time he signs his name. Well, it is some satisfaction to know that he has at last learned to sign his name with two capital letters, instead of continuing to make his mark with an X.

AN old bachelor by the name of Evans, got off the following jeu d'esprit:—He was introduced to a beautiful young widow, also named Evans. The introduction was in this wise: "Mr. Evans, Mrs. Evans!" Exclaimed the spirited bachelor: "The very lady I have been in search of for the last forty years!"

"A SELL."

Sazon (who has not taken a fish): "By Jove! that's a beauty!"

Native: "A-ye, it's a fine trout, and lots o' them, gin ye come wi' me."

Sazon (delighted): "Where? Oh, where?"

Native: "The first shop over by!"—*Punch.*

It is stated that since the 3rd June, the Derby Day, no less than 1,121 male children have been christened George Frederick. It seems very fortunate that Mr. Cartwright's horse should have been the winner; it would have been very troublesome for the good folks at Lloyd's had the same number of "Atlantic" mails been started in the same time.—*Judy.*

AMATEUR MINSTRELS.

Tenore Leggiere: "Don't you perceive a great improvement in the way I produce my piano notes?"

Tenore Robusto: "Well you produce them so precious piano that I can't hear them; but you don't make such hideous faces as you used—and that's an improvement!"—*Punch.*

A TRULY HAPPY DAY.

"Well, Leonora, what have you and Harold been doing at Aunt Mabel's to-day?"

"Had dinner."

"And what did you do after dinner?"

"Had tea."

"But what did you do between dinner and tea?"

"Had some cake!"—*Judy.*

In a sequestered village in the north of Scotland, there lived an old lady who had an itching ear for the wonderful. During the Franco-German war, a neighbour ran in hurriedly, crying: "Jenny! did ye hear the news? Napoleon's ta'en!" "Ay, ay," quoth the old dame; "I thoct there was something up, for I saw twa policemen gaun up the road the day."

SERVE HIM RIGHT!

Oh, the ingratitude of some people! Look here: A blacksmith has been fined at Aberdeen for assaulting a labourer. His defence was that the complainant was pressing drink upon him for the purpose of making him drunk.

We are glad the unappreciative being was fined, and we should hope nobody will ever offer to stand him a drink again. Perhaps he will be sorry when he has to find himself either sober or in liquor.—*Fun.*

CAUSE AND EFFECT.—The ingratitude of the Home Rulers in endeavouring to trace to a wrong cause the evils that Ireland is suffering from, and which are really due to the perverse use made of the bounties bestowed upon her, has been aptly illustrated recently by a speaker on the subject of the following quotation:—Landlord Baronet: "How are you, your good man? What has happened to you?—your head is swollen." "Faix, an' it's as well ye may ax; me own mother wouldn't know me this blessed morning; 'tis all your own doin' entirely." "My doing!" replies the astonished baronet. "What can I have to do with the state you are in, my good

man?" "Yes, it is your doin'," answers the enraged proprietor of a swollen head; "'tis all your doin', and well ye may be proud of it. 'Twas them blessed bees ye gov me. We brought them into the house last night, an' where did we put them but into the pig's corner. Well, after Katty an' the children an' myself was a while in bid, the pig goes rootin' about the house, and he wasn't aisy till he hooked his nose into the hive, and split the bees about the flure; and thin whin I got out of bid to let out the pig that was a-roarin' through the house, the bees sittled down on me, an' began stingin' me, an' I jumped into bid agin wid the bees a-buzzin' an' a-stingin' us under the clothes, out we all jumped agin, and such a night was never spit in Ireland as we spat last night. What wid Katty and the childer a-roarin' an' a-bellin', an' the pig tarin' up an' down like mad, an' Katty wid the besom, an' myself wid the fryin'-pan flattenin' the bees agin the wall till mornin', an' thin the sight we wor in the mornin', it's ashamed of yerself ye ought to be!"

BISHOPAL MAGNETISM.—Some papers have given currency to a statement that the Bishop of Winchester, at a confirmation lately held by his lordship at Guildford, caused certain heads, presented to him for imposition of hands on them, to be divested of obnoxious hair, we all know, is an obstacle to the electric current. When piled in fantastic forms, and still more where false, it may well be supposed a complete non-conductor of any edifying influence which can be imparted by the hands of a bishop.—*Punch*.

LIFE INSURANCE.

A family named Kemper moved into a house in a new street last week, and Benjamin Gunn, the life insurance agent, who lives in the same street, was the first caller. He dropped in to see if he could not take out a policy for Mr. Kemper.

Mrs. Kemper came down to the parlour to see him.

"I suppose," said Gunn, "Mr. Kemper has no insurance on his life."

"No," said Mrs. Kemper.

"Well, I should like him to take out a policy in our company. It's the safest in the world; largest capital, smallest rates, and biggest dividends."

"Mr. Kemper don't take much interest in such things now," said Mrs. K.

"Well, madam, but he ought to do so, in common justice to you. No man knows when he will die, and by paying a ridiculously small sum now Mr. Kemper can leave his family in affluence. I should like to hand you for him a few pamphlets containing statistics upon the subject; may I?"

"Of course, if you wish to do so."

"Don't you think he can be induced to insure?" asked Gunn.

"I hardly think so," replied Mrs. Kemper.

"He is in good health, I suppose. Has he complained of being ill?"

"Not lately."

"May I ask if he has any considerable wealth?"

"Not a farthing."

"Then of course he must insure. No man can afford to neglect such an opportunity. I suppose he travels sometimes; goes about on the railway and other dangerous places?"

"No, he keeps very quiet."

"Man of steady habits, I s'pose?"

"Very steady."

"He is just the man I want," said Gunn. "I know I can get him to take out a policy."

"I don't think you can," replied Mrs. Kemper.

"Why, when will he be at home? I'll call on him. I don't know any reason why I shouldn't insure him."

"I do," replied Mrs. Kemper.

"Why?"

"He has been dead twenty-seven years!" said the widow.

Then Gunn left all of a sudden. He will not insure any of the Kempers.

It is said that on one occasion, as Miss Wordsworth, sister of the poet, was passing through a wood, which the stock-dove was filling with its soft music, she fell in with a countrywoman, who exclaimed, "I am so fond of stock-doves!" "Oh!" thought Miss Wordsworth, "at last I have come on one of nature's poets, with a soul to appreciate the beautiful music of the birds." Very ruthlessly was the dream disenchanted by an explanatory remark of the woman's: "Some likes them in pie, and some likes them roasted; but for my part I think there's nothing like them stewed with onions."

A SCOTCH PARADISE.—Otago is sacred to Scotchmen. Here is a story which, besides being good, is true in illustration of the fact. The other day tenders were called for the public work in Otago. One Macpherson was successful. Mr. Macpherson was accordingly invited to attend and complete his contract. To the amazement of all the officials, a full-blooded Chinaman with a noble pinstrip put in an

appearance. "Where's Mr. Macpherson?" asked the clerk. "Me!" replied John. "How came you to be called Macpherson?" "Oh, nobody got nothing in Otago if he not a Mac," answered the unabashed Celestial.

A PRECOCIOUS STREET ARAB.—Not long ago an officer of the London School Board was crossing Covent-garden Market at a late hour, when he found a little fellow making his bed for the night in a fruit basket. "Would you not like to go to school and be well cared for?" said the official. "No," said the urchin. "But do you know I am one of the people who are authorized to take up little boys whom I find as I find you, and take them to school?" "I know you are, old chap, if you find them in the streets, but this here is not a street, it is private property, and if you interfere with my liberty, the Duke of Bedford will be down upon you. I know the hant as well as you."

YOUR LETTERS.

WITH the click-click-click of yon golden hands,

The sands of twilight fall,
The ruby gleam of the firelight gilda
Your picture on the wall.

Far off, a tinkling rivallet

Of sweet waltz-music strays

Through the delicious reverie

That wraps the dying days.

I take your letters one by one,

From out their secret place—

A perfumed nest of sandal-wood,

Wrought with barbaric grace.

Along each passion-freighted page

My tearless glances burn,

Then watch them, through the brazier

bars,

To dust and ashes turn.

I loved you—not as women love,

In idyl and romance;

For the golden breath of a summer day,

Or the measure of a dance.

I loved you, not as manhood loves—

For beauty, gold, or power—

The airy phantasy that spans

The circle of an hour.

I loved you with the brooding dread,

The hushed solemnity

Of souls that stake their all to win

Or lose—eternity.

I loved you—let the dream go by.

In all the wasted years

You held my heart, you were not worth

The weakest of my tears!

And so I watch while darkness blots

Your picture from the wall,

This Dead-Sea fruit of squandered years

To dust and ashes fall.

E. A. B.

GEMS.

TRUTH may languish, but can never perish.

It is apparent to a parent that a great many children get on the wrong track because the switch is misplaced.

THERE is nothing on earth worthy of being compared for a moment with love. No other thing that can give, by itself, unalloying happiness. A loveless life is worthless, though passed in luxury, and crowned with the proudest laurels of successful ambition. A life well set about with love is blessed, though haunted by that relentless fate which seems to deny to some men and women what the world calls success.

IN our early youth, while yet we live only among those we love, we love without restraint, and our hearts overflow with every look, word and action. But when we enter the world, and are repulsed by strangers, forgotten by friends, we grow more and more timid in our approaches even to those we love best. How delightful to us then are the little caresses of children! All sincerity, all affection, they fly into our arms; and then and then only we feel our first confidence, our first pleasure.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

ARTIFICIAL HONEY.—White sugar, five pounds; water, three pints; alum, one fourth ounce; gradually bring it to a boil, skimming well; when cool add one and one-half pound bees' honey and four drops of peppermint essence.

HAM CAKE.—A capital way of disposing of the remains of a ham and making an excellent dish for

breakfast is: Take a pound and a half of ham, fat and lean together; put it into a mortar and pound it, or pass it through a sausage-machine; boil a large slice of bread in half a pint of milk, and beat it and the ham well together; add an egg beaten up. Put the whole into a mould, and bake a rich brown.

POTATO CHOPS.—Boil and mash some nice mealy potatoes; then with one or two well-beaten eggs make them into a paste, work it well, dust it over with flour, and roll out. Take some nice thin neck of mutton or lamb chops, carefully trim off the fat, pepper and salt them on both sides, cut the paste into shape, cover over like a puff, pinch the edges and fry of a light brown; they look better if about an inch of the bone is left visible.

LEMON PIE.—Three eggs (save the whites of two) juice and peel of one lemon, one cup of boiling water, one tablespoonful of corn flour, one cup of sugar. Bake. Grate the lemon and pour the boiling water over the juice and peel; beat the eggs with the corn flour, and add to the boiling water; let it cool before adding the sugar. Beat the whites of the two eggs with one tablespoonful of sugar, and spread over the top of the pie. Have the undercrust of pastry.

STATISTICS.

THE MEAT SUPPLY OF GREAT BRITAIN.—The report of the Veterinary Department of the Privy Council, issued recently, supplies the following information as to the meat supply of Great Britain during the past year. The number of cattle in England on the 25th of June last was 5,964,549, being an increase of over 300,000 on the number in 1872, and 400,000 above the average of the five years 1869 to 1873 inclusive. The number of sheep was 29,427,635, being 1,500,000 above 1872, and nearly 1,000,000 above the average for the years mentioned above. In swine there was a decline in number from 1872 of 220,000, although the average, 2,374,640, was exceeded by 125,000. The imports of cattle from Ireland numbered 684,618, against 616,080 in 1872; of sheep and lambs 604,695, against 518,606 in 1872; of swine, 364,371, against 443,644 in 1872. Of foreign cattle 198,968 were imported in 1873, against 171,996 in 1872, and 247,426 in 1871; the numbers for sheep were 849,278, 810,539, and 917,077, and for swine 79,923, 16,058, and 85,615. From the Channel Islands we received 86 bulls, 2,421 cows, and 56 calves, Jersey sending the great majority, and Alderney only 13 cows and 2 calves. Of the cattle from foreign parts Germany and Holland run a close race for first place in quantity, the numbers being 59,891 and 59,168. The greatest number of sheep also came from Germany, while France sent most swine.

MISCELLANEOUS.

SEVERAL ladies are now reading for the bar chambers.

MISS RICHARDS, a girl 15 years old, is about to walk at Horfield 1,000 miles in 1,000 consecutive hours.

The total strength of the French army in its present condition is 1,600,000 men.

The wine crop in the United States is 20,000,000 gallons.

"BOILED EGGS" is the name adopted by a cricket club, to signify how impossible it is to beat them.

THE other day, Mr. Frank Buckland turned a number of young trout into the Serpentine.

THE *Deutsche Nachrichten* confirms the report that the betrothal of Princess Beatrice to the Grand Duke of Saxe-Coburg will shortly take place.

ONE of the great troubles which oystermen have to contend with is the starfish. This rapacious enemy destroys thousands of bushels of oysters every year.

WE learn from the Italian papers that the attempts made last year in Italy, without success, to grow the tea-plant, are being renewed in the southern districts of Sicily.

THE Metropolitan Board of Works recently resolved to contribute 370,000l. towards a new street from King William Street towards Fenchurch Street.

A new apparatus for ventilating the House of Commons has just been tried for the first time. The members consume from 60,000 to 90,000 gallons a minute. Is this temperate?

THE home of the cactus family appears to be in southern Arizona. Here the great cactus, *cereus giganteus*, is from thirty feet to forty feet high, and from three feet to four feet in diameter.

WHAT a big style is that of the manufacturing districts! The Leeds School Board now employs 401 teachers and pupil teachers, has a roll of 43,000 youngsters on its elementary list, and keeps no less than 11 detectives, or "school attendance officers," to look up youngsters who are not sent to school!

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

CHEMISTS.—In another column your request has been complied with. That is all we have to say.
S. E.—If the gentleman thinks well of the matter he will take pains to find you out; if otherwise he will allow it to fall to the ground.

GREEN GRASS.—The handwriting appears to be normally good, but the specimen has been penned in great haste and with little care.

ENTOMOLOGIST.—To exhibit in this page wood-cuts representing facsimiles of the handwriting of any of our correspondents does not come within our notion of what is desirable.

PAULINE W. (Huddersfield).—Try Steel's Rheumatic and Gout Pills; they are a sure remedy for your painful though common complaint. Any chemist will supply you with the same.

AN ARTILLERYMAN (Woolwich).—To bear a detachment of artillery, firing only eight-pounder guns, the ice on the river or lake must be frozen quite five inches thick. Before ice will bear "any weight" it must be frozen to the thickness of twelve inches.

ROCHFORD-BOLEY.—Any one skilled in the matter of drugs would never be so foolish as to name one hap-hazard and without knowledge of the patient. You should submit your ailments whatever they may be to the inspection of a duly qualified practitioner.

MIRIAM B.—The ladies' swimming-bath in the Queen's Road, Bayswater, is forty-five feet long and fifty-six feet wide; it is fitted up with a dozen dressing-boxes, and is lighted from the roof, which has been picked out in cool neutral tints, gold being introduced here and there.

S. C. M.—Cardinal Wolsey is said to have owed his first rise in life to the energy with which he travelled to the Continent for the purpose of conveying an important message from King Henry the Seventh to the Emperor Maximilian. Wolsey was at that time chaplain to the king and part of the rapidity of his journey was due to his good horsemanship; on his return he rode from Dover to Richmond in about seven hours.

MISCHIEF.—You can get rid of the ants by fumigation. That is, stop every place, large or minute, through which air enters your little shop. Then put some sulphur in a brazier and set light to the sulphur, then run away and close the door after you. The fuming of the door must have been previously made air-tight, and you must take great care that you yourself escape suffocation as you pursue this destruction of your enemies.

HELEN G.—We do not recommend depilatories, because we believe that as a rule their efficacious application by amateurs injures the skin; this is a good reason why you should consult a skillful surgeon on the subject. To improve your complexion take an early morning walk preceded by a cold water hip-bath. The handwriting is good enough, though it is rather fussy and the reverse of neat.

F. T. M.—Your notion is not so very wide of the facts, that is if the recent intelligence is authentic, for it has been stated that the Brahmins of Allahabad have amongst other regulations concerning the marriage ceremony declared that no girl shall be married to a man who is not three years her senior at the least, and that nobody shall give his daughter in marriage to a man who is more than fifty years old.

FRANK A.—The word "Aqua" is variously significant, whether it be used alone or as part of a compound word. Aqua is the Latin word for water, and that is its ordinary meaning; but aqua is also the commercial name in Scotland for malt spirit. The aqua regia you inquire for is the mixture which has power to dissolve the precious metal, gold. Aqua regia is usually made by dissolving in nitric acid either sal ammoniac or common salt, both of which are combinations of muriatic acid with alkali.

EMMA.—For some time past the authorities of Japan have been zealous in emulating English customs, and the education of women—we should rather say the higher education of women—is a subject in which great exertions have been made in that country. Recently, however, complaints have been made of keeping girl scholars at the Japanese private and government schools, as the girls invariably marry before completing their terms of study.

NEZ ROUGE.—Other remedies having failed you might try what the drinking of mineral waters will do for you, and if you can take change of air at the same time so much the better. In these days the waters can be taken far away from the place whence they spring, since large numbers of bottles are constantly arriving in London from the Continent and elsewhere. You should, however, take medical advice as to the precise description suitable to you.

R. N. Y.—Venice turpentine is obtained from the larch, and is said to be contained in peculiar sacs in the upper part of the stem, and to be obtained by puncturing them

It is a rosy liquid, colourless or brownish green, having a somewhat unpleasant odour and bitter taste. Oil of turpentine is the most plentiful and useful of oils. It is obtained from a species of pine very plentiful in the Carolinas, Georgia and Alabama. The tree is known as the long leaved pine (pinus Austriaca), and is found only where the original forest has not been removed.

MARY.—By the use of Judson's dyes the dirtiness and the difficulty of home-dyeing are done away with. The work may be done with a certainty of success, and without so much as soiling the fingers. Their preparations may be bought at any chemist, at 6d. a bottle, and give a considerable variety of colours, mostly of great delicacy and brilliancy. The colours sold are: magenta, mauve, violet, puce, purple, canary, cerise, scarlet, orange, blue, pink, green, crimson, brown, black, lavender, slate and gray; and different shades of these colours may be formed by using a greater or lesser proportion of water.

DESPERATE BILL.—Practice makes perfect in letter writing as in most other things. A simple remedy for an ordinary cough is the bathing of your feet in warm water before retiring to bed; when in bed cover yourself with sufficient blankets or wraps to induce perspiration. Sometimes a little aperient medicine is useful. If the cough continues, notwithstanding the use of these means, you should consult a medical man without delay. Chemistry is the science which treats of the properties of the different kinds of matter in the world, the laws by which they are governed, the proportions in which they combine together to form certain compounds and the properties of these compounds.

C. A. L.—Linsed oil is obtained from flax seed, by grinding the same under heavy stones, set on edge and made to revolve on beds of stone. Attached to the edge stones are scrapers which throw the seed into the circular track of the roller. The ground seed is placed in strong, woven woollen bags, which bags are covered with mats made of horsehair and sole-leather, of a proper and sufficient width to protect the bags in the operation of pressing. These mats with their contents are subjected to an immense hydraulic pressure, and the expressed oil flows off into large iron tanks where it is allowed to settle. What remains in the bags after the pressure is known as oil-cake.

THE NEWS OF OLDEN TIME.

We hold a paper in our hands—

"A Journal of To-day"

So reads its modest title-page,

Now dim with age and gray.

'Tis filled with startling incidents,

With essay, tale and rhyme—

The doings of the long ago—

The news of olden time.

The nimble fingers, deft and spry,

That set this type of yore,

Have mingled with their kindred dust,

Full fifty years or more;

Given, long ago, the very scribe

That drove the good quill-pen;

Closed, years ago, the eyes that read

The thoughts of honest men.

And yet, in those time-honoured days,

They had their little spite

And jealousies, and quarrelled o'er

Their fancied wrongs and rights.

The factions, led to victory,

Or beaten, left the field;

Poor, human hearts—so much like ours

They'd rather die than yield.

We run our eyes across the page,

And up and down each column;

We read the lists of marriage; and

We births, and deaths, so solemn;

And then we wonder who will read,

When we have passed away,

A hundred years or more to come,

Our "Journals of To-day." M. A. K.

J. P. B.—Callisthenes is a sort of feminine gymnastics taught at most ladies' schools. This moderate description of physical exercise is used not merely for the purpose of giving a graceful deportment to the pupil, but also that the physical strength may be carefully developed and promoted.

ANNE.—The name belongs to the classical mythology.

Calliope was one of the nine muses and the last of the nine. She is said to have taken her name from the sweetness of her voice and was the muse of epic poetry. Her distinguishing office was to record heroic actions; she is represented with a tablet and style or with a roll of paper in her hand.

M. ROSE.—Do not pull the gray hairs out, that we advise very decidedly; and as much as decidedly would we say don't use a dye. There is not only a great deal of trouble and mess about dyes but they are often peculiarly objectionable to young men, and as the time for sweet-heating is not yet over with you, on that score you should, so we think, abjure a dye. You can keep the hair cleaner and the head also by only using the ordinary soap and water once a week or thereabouts.

KATE.—The description of the hands being at the same time numb and red is a phenomenon for which we cannot account. We should have assigned the numbness to a defective circulation, to be remedied perhaps by greater attention to exercise, had not the redness seemed to negative that idea. If you consider the matter important enough you should consult some member of the medical profession. Your handwriting is remarkably good. Pray don't think of attempting to alter it. You should be congratulated upon the style of your penmanship.

J. G. S.—The verses when read by your lady love no doubt helped to strengthen the amiable and pretty sentiment by which you were—or should we use the present tense, and say by which?—you are animated. But their merit is small generally, too small to atone for two or three glaring errors which would be perceived by any person whose sympathy with you in your gushing mood was at all imperfect. 2. The tea description of rose is said to answer very well in boxes outside the window. They flourish best in a rich, loamy soil well drained. You must get some cuttings from a nursery garden, the cuttings strike very freely from spring to autumn, so you have no time to lose. Seeds for other flowers can be purchased

for a very few pence at nursery gardens or at the various markets and warehouses in London and other large towns. The seed-time for Virginia and other stocks is at the end of July and during August and September. They flower in the spring if they are carefully protected in pots during the cold weather, and about April should be transplanted into window-boxes, using light, rich soil, well drained. You can have mignonette to bloom both in winter and spring, and therefore may sow at the end of July and middle of August and also at the beginning of March. Drain the pots well and sow in fresh soil which has little manurial matter of any kind in it. You should buy a small box or window-garden, for all the information you require cannot be comprised within the limits of an answer. 3. As to the question about marriage with which your letter concludes—a marriage between a Protestant and Roman Catholic can be legally solemnized in a Roman Catholic church provided such church is duly licensed for the purpose.

LITTLE EMILIE, petite, fair, young and pretty, wishes to meet with a dark young man. He must have a good income.

LOUISE C. G., twenty-two, dark, fond of home, and very affectionate. Respondent must be dark, fond of home, and a steady mechanic.

EMILIE E. would like to correspond with a handsome young man about twenty. She is dark, of medium height, good tempered, and considered handsome.

W. H. J., twenty-two, tall, hazel eyes, dark-brown hair, a mechanic, would like to correspond with a young lady about seventeen, who is loving, and fond of home.

ANNIE, tall, dark, gray eyes, considered pretty, and has a small income, would be glad to hear from a fair gentleman, with a view to marriage; an Irish gentleman preferred.

MARY G., thirty, has an income of 130*l.*, steady, plain, would make a good husband. Respondent should be a fair girl, passably good looking, fond of home, and a good housekeeper.

CLERICUS, twenty-two, a city clerk, rather short, dark, good looking, earning 110*l.* per annum, would like to correspond with a young lady not tall, having an income or property.

NELLIE D., nineteen, a fair complexioned young lady, wishes to correspond with a dark complexioned young man, who is fond of home and music, has an income, and is affectionate to a young lady.

JESSE, eighteen, tall, fair young lady, wishes to marry a dark young gentleman, with a good income, fond of home and children. Any gentleman who answers this description is earnestly requested to reply at the earliest opportunity.

MIRIAM, nut-brown hair, dark eyes, fair complexion, very affectionate, fond of children, would like to correspond with a tall, dark gentleman, who is loving, fond of home, and able to keep a wife; one in H.M.S. not objected to. Has a small income.

MARY M., thirty-two, medium height, dark, can cook, bake and make a shirt, darn, sew, crochet, is an excellent housekeeper, and in fact can do almost anything, would like to correspond with a steady man from thirty-five to forty-five.

DICK STARLIGHT by—"E. G.," twenty-eight, cheerful, affectionate, domesticated, has a house of furniture of her own, and is by no means discontented with her position in life, but feels lonely at times, and would like to meet with an affectionate partner, one who is a lover of home and domestic comforts. "E. G." can play the piano and sing, she has no father or mother, and "Dick" can have her undivided affection if he can win it and deserve it.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

HEAD BOWLINES is responded to by—"Lizzie C.," who thinks she is all he requires.

LIZZIE by—"C. C. O. E.," medium height, an architect by profession.

NIXA by—"William H.," 5ft. 6in., blue eyes, brown hair, and good tempered.

SEMPER FIDELIS by—"C. D.," a lady of twenty-six, fair, good looking, who will have a fortune.

L. S. by—"West India Docks," medium height, earning 60*l.* a year, fresh complexion, dark-blue eyes, and brown hair.

HAIRY STAG by—"Green Grass," who is just of age, merry, tall, handsome, and dearly loves sailors, especially fair ones.

EARNEST SEEKER by—"One Waiting to be Found," twenty, 5ft., good housekeeper, dark hair, blue eyes, and fair complexion.

BRUNSWICK by—"Julia," seventeen, medium height, the daughter of a tradesman, fair complexion, loving; and by—"J. E.," eighteen, medium height, respectfully connected, fair, loving, a good housekeeper, and thinks she would suit him exactly.

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